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HENRY ST. JOHN,

LORD VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

WITH

THE LIFE

OF

LORD BOLINGBROKE

BY DR. GOLDSMITH,

NOW ENLARGED BY MORE RECENT INFORMATION RELATIVE TO HIS PUBLICK AND PERSONAL CHARACTER, SELECTED FROM VARIOUS AUTHORITIES.

A NEW EDITION,

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

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A SKETCH OF THE STATE AND HISTORY OF EUROPE,

FROM THE PYRENEAN TREATY

IN ONE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY-NINE,

TO

THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHT.

THE first observation I shall make on this third period of modern history is, that as the ambition of Charles the fifth, who united the whole formidable power of Austria in himself, and the restless temper, the cruelty and bigotry of Philip the second, were principally objects of the attention and solicitude of the councils of Europe, in the first of these periods; and as the ambition of Ferdinand the second, and the third, who aimed at nothing less than extirpating the protestant interest, and under that pretence subduing the liberties of Germany, were objects of the same kind in the second; so an opposition to the growing power of France, or to speak more properly, to the exorbitant ambition of the house of Bourbon, has been the principal affair of Europe, during the greatest part of the present period. The design of aspiring to universal monarchy was imputed to Charles the fifth, as soon as he began to give

proofs of his ambition and capacity. The same design was imputed to Lewis the fourteenth, as soon as he began to feel his own strength, and the weakness of his neighbours. Neither of these princes was induced, I believe, by the flattery of his courtiers, or the apprehensions of his adversaries, to entertain so chimerical a design as this would have been, even in that false sense wherein the word universal is so often understood: and I mistake very much if either of them was of a character, or in circumstances, to undertake it. Both of them had strong desires to raise their families higher, and to extend their dominions farther; but neither of them had that bold and adventurous ambition which makes a conqueror and a hero. These apprehensions however were given wisely, and taken usefully. They cannot be given nor taken too soon when such powers as these arise; because when such powers as these are besieged as it were early, by the common policy and watchfulness of their neighbours, each of them may in his turn of strength sally forth, and gain a little ground; but none of them will be able to push their conquests far, and much less to consummate the entire projects of their ambition. Beside the occasional opposition that was given to Charles the fifth by our Henry the eighth, according to the different moods of humour he was in; by the popes, according to the several turns of their private interest; and by the princes of Germany, according to the occasions or pretences that religion or civil liberty furnished; he had

had from his first setting out a rival and an enemy in Francis the first, who did not maintain his cause "in forma pauperis," if I may use such an expression: as we have seen the house of Austria sue, in our days, for dominion at the gate of every palace in Europe. Francis the first was the principal in his own quarrels, paid his own armies, fought his own battles; and though his valour alone did not hinder Charles the fifth from subduing all Europe, as Bayle, a better philologer than politician, somewhere asserts, but a multitude of other circumstances easily to be traced in history; yet he contributed by his victories, and even by his defeats, to waste the strength and check the course of that growing power. Lewis the fourteenth had no rival of this kind in the house of Austria, nor indeed any enemy of this importance to combat, till the prince of Orange became King of Great Britain: and he had great advantages in many other respects, which it is necessary to consider in order to make a true judgment on the affairs of Europe from the year one thousand six hundred and sixty. You will discover the first of these advantages, and such as were productive of all the rest, in the conduct of Richelieu and of Mazarin. Richelieu formed the great design, and laid the foundations: Mazarin pursued the design, and raised the superstructure. If I do not deceive myself extremely, there are few passages in history that deserve your lordship's attention more than the conduct that the first and greatest of these ministers held, in laying the foundations I

to seize the elector. He executed his orders with success, and carried this prince prisoner into Brabant. Richelieu seized the lucky circumstance; he reclaimed the elector: and, on the refusal of the cardinal infant, the war was declared. France, you see, appeared the common friend of liberty, the defender of it in the Low Countries against the king of Spain, and in Germany against the emperor, as well as the protector of the princes of the empire, many of whose states had been illegally invaded, and whose persons were no longer safe from violence even in their own palaces. All these appearances were kept up in the negotiations at Munster, where Mazarin reaped what Richelieu had sowed. The demands that France made for herself were very great; but the conjuncture was favourable, and she improved it to the utmost. No figure could be more flattering than hers, at the head of these negotiations; nor more mortifying than the emperor's through the whole course of the treaty. The princes and states of the empire had been treated as vassals by the emperor: France determined them to treat with him on this occasion as sovereigns, and supported them in this determination. While Sweden seemed concerned for the protestant interest alone, and showed no other regard, as she had no other alliance; France affected to be impartial alike to the protestant and to the papist, and to have no interest at heart but the common interest of the Germanic body. Her demands were excessive, but they were to be satisfied principally out of the emperor's

emperor's patrimonial dominions. It had been the art of her ministers to establish this general maxim on many particular experiences, that the grandeur of France was a real, and would be a constant security to the rights and liberties of the empire against the emperour: and it is no wonder therefore, this maxim prevailing, injuries, resentments, and jealousies being fresh on one side, and services, obligations, and confidence on the other, that the Germans were not unwilling France should extend her empire on this side of the Rhine, while Sweden did the same on this side of the Baltic. These treaties, and the immense credit and influence that France had acquired by them in the empire, put it out of the power of one branch of the house of Austria to return the obligations of assistance to the other, in the war that continued between France and Spain, till the Pyrenean treaty. By this treaty the superiority of the house of Bourbon over the house of Austria was not only completed and confirmed, but the great design of uniting the Spanish and the French monarchies under the former was laid.

The third period therefore begins by a great change of the balance of power in Europe, and by the prospect of one much greater and more fatal. Before I descend into the particulars I intend to mention, of the course of affairs, and of the political conduct of the great powers of Europe in this third period; give me leave to cast my eyes once more back on the second. The reflection I

am

am going to make seems to me important, and leads to all that is to follow.

The Dutch made their peace separately at Munster with Spain, who acknowledged then the sovereignty and independency of their commonwealth. The French, who had been, after our Elizabeth, their principal support, reproached them severely for this breach of faith. They excused themselves in the best manner, and by the best reasons, they could. All this your lordship will find in the monuments of that time. But I think it not improbable, that they had a motive you will not find there, and which it was not proper to give as a reason or excuse to the French. Might not the wise men among them consider even then, beside the immediate advantages that accrued by this treaty to their commonwealth, that the imperial power was fallen; that the power of Spain was vastly reduced; that the house of Austria was nothing more than the shadow of a great name, and that the house of Bourbon was advancing, by large strides, to a degree of power as exorbitant, and as formidable as that of the other family had been in the hands of Charles the fifth, of Philip the Second, and lately of the two Ferdinands? Might they not foresee, even then, what happened in the course of very few years, when they were obliged, for their own security, to assist their old enemies the Spaniards against their old friends the French? I think they might. Our Charles the first was no great politician, and yet he

he seemed to discern, that the balance of power was turning in favour of France, some years before the treaties of Westphalia. He refused to be neuter, and threatened to take part with Spain, if the French pursued the design of besieging Dunkirk and Graveline, according to a concert taken between them and the Dutch, and in pursuance of a treaty for dividing the Spanish Low Countries, which Richelieu had negotiated. Cromwell either did not discern this turn of the balance of power, long afterward when it was much more visible; or, discerning it, he was induced by reasons of private interest to act against the general interest of Europe. Cromwell joined with France against Spain, and though he got Jamaica and Dunkirk, he drove the Spaniards into a necessity of making a peace with France, that has disturbed the peace of the world almost fourscore years, and the consequences of which have well nigh beggared in our times the nation he enslaved in his. There is a tradition, I have heard it from persons who lived in those days, and I believe it came from Thurloe, that Cromwell was in treaty with Spain, and ready to turn his arms against France when he died. If this fact was certain, as little as I honour his memory, I should have some regret that he died so soon. But whatever his intentions were, we must charge the Pyrenean treaty, and the fatal consequences of it, in great measure to his account. The Spaniards abhorred the thought of marrying their Infanta to Lewis the fourteenth. It was on this point that they broke the negotiation Lionne had

had begun: and your lordship will perceive, that if they resumed it afterward, and offered the marriage they had before rejected, Cromwell's league with France was a principal inducement to this alteration of their resolutions.

The precise point at which the scales of power turn, like that of the solstice in either tropic, is imperceptible to common observation: and, in one case as in the other, some progress must be made in the new direction, before the change is perceived. They who are in the sinking scale, for in the political balance of power, unlike to all others, the scale that is empty sinks, and that which is full rises; they who are in the sinking scale do not easily come off from the habitual prejudices of superiour wealth, or power, or skill, or courage, nor from the confidence that these prejudices inspire. They who are in the rising scale do not immediately feel their strength, nor assume that confidence in it which successful experience gives them afterward. They who are the most concerned to watch the variations of this balance misjudge often in the same manner, and from the same prejudices. They continue to dread a power no longer able to hurt them, or they continue to have no apprehensions of a power that grows daily more formidable. Spain verified the first observation at the end of the second period, when, proud and poor, and enterprising and feeble, she still thought herself a match for France. France verified the second observation at the beginning of the third period, when the triple alliance stopped

ped the progress of her arms, which alliances much more considerable were not able to effect afterward. The other principal powers of Europe, in their turns, have verified the third observation in both it's parts, through the whole course of this period.

When Lewis the fourteenth took the administration of affairs into his own hands, about the year one thousand six hundred and sixty, he was in the prime of his age, and had, what princes seldom have, the advantages of youth and those of experience together. Their education is generally bad; for which reason royal birth, that gives a right to the throne among other people, gave an absolute exclusion from it among the Mamalukes. His was, in all respects, except one, as bad as that of other princes. He jested sometimes on his own ignorance; and there were other defects in his character, owing to his education, which he did not see. But Mazarin had initiated him betimes in the mysteries of his policy. He had seen a great part of those foundations laid, on which he was to raise the fabrick of his future grandeur: and as Mazarin finished the work that Richelieu began, he had the lessons of one, and the examples of both, to instruct him. He had acquired habits of secrecy and method, in business; of reserve, discretion, decency, and dignity, in behaviour. If he was not the greatest king, he was the best actor of majesty at least, that ever filled a throne. He by no means wanted that courage which is commonly called bravery, though the want of it was imputed

imputed to him in the midst of his greatest triumphs: nor that other courage, less ostentatious and more rarely found, calm, steady, persevering resolution; which seems to arise less from the temper of the body, and is therefore called courage of the mind. He had them both most certainly, and I could produce unquestionable anecdotes in proof. He was, in one word, much superiour to any prince with whom he had to do, when he began to govern. He was surrounded with great captains bred in former wars, and with great ministers bred in the same school as himself. They who had worked under Mazarin worked on the same plan under him; and as they had the advantages of genius and experience over most of the ministers of other countries, so they had another advantage over those who were equal or superiour to them: the advantage of serving a master whose absolute power was established; and the advantage of a situation wherein they might exert their whole capacity without contradiction; over that, for instance, wherein your lordship's great grandfather was placed, at the same time, in England, and John de Wit in Holland. Among these ministers, Colbert must be mentioned particularly upon this occasion; because it was he who improved the wealth and consequently the power of France extremely, by the order he put into the finances, and by the encouragement he gave to trade and manufactures. The soil, the climate, the situation of France, the ingenuity, the industry, the vivacity of her inhabitants

bitants are such; she has so little want of the product of other countries, and other countries have so many real or imaginary wants to be supplied by her; that when she is not at war with all her neighbours, when her domestick quiet is preserved and any tolerable administration of government prevails, she must grow rich at the expense of those who trade, and even of those who do not open a trade, with her. Her bawbles, her modes, the follies and extravagancies of her luxury, cost England, about the time we are speaking of, little less than eight hundred thousand pounds sterling a year, and other nations in their proportions. Colbert made the most of all these advantageous circumstances, and while he filled the national spunge, he taught his successors how to squeeze it; a secret that he repented having discovered, they say, when he saw the immense sums that were necessary to supply the growing magnificence of his master.

This was the character of Lewis the fourteenth, and this was the state of his kingdom at the beginning of the present period. If his power was great, his pretensions were still greater. He had renounced, and the Infanta with his consent had renounced, all right to the succession of Spain, in the strongest terms that the precaution of the councils of Madrid could contrive. No matter; he consented to these renunciations, but your lordship will find by the Letters of Mazarin, and by other memoriáls, that he acted on the contrary principle, from the first, which he avowed soon afterward.

afterward. Such a power, and such pretensions, should have given, one would think, an immediate alarm to the rest of Europe. Philip the fourth was broken and decayed, like the monarchy he governed. One of his sons died, as I remember, during the negotiations that preceded the year one thousand six hundred and sixty; and the survivor, who was Charles the second, rather languished than lived, from the cradle to the grave. So dangerous a contingency, therefore, as the union of the two monarchies of France and Spain, being in view forty years together; one would imagine, that the principal powers of Europe had the means of preventing it constantly in view during the same time. But it was otherwise. France acted very systematically from the year one thousand six hundred and sixty, to the death of king Charles the second of Spain. She never lost sight of her great object, the succession to the whole Spanish monarchy; and she accepted the will of the king of Spain in favour of the duke of Anjou. As she never lost sight of her great object during this time, so she lost no opportunity of increasing her power while she waited for that of succeeding in her pretensions. The two branches of Austria were in no condition of making a considerable opposition to her designs and attempts. Holland, who of all other powers was the most concerned to oppose them, was at that time under two influences that hindered her from pursuing her true interest. Her true interest was to have used her utmost endeavours to unite

closely

closely and intimately with England on the restoration of king Charles. She did the very contrary. John de Wit, at the head of the Louvestein faction, governed. The interest of his party was to keep the house of Orange down: he courted therefore the friendship of France, and neglected that of England. The alliance between our nation and the Dutch was renewed, I think, in one thousand six hundred and sixty-two; but the latter had made a defensive league with France a little before, on the supposition principally of a war with England. The war became inevitable very soon. Cromwell had chastised them for their usurpations in trade, and the outrages and cruelties they had committed; but he had not cured them. The same spirit continued in the Dutch, the same resentments in the English: and the pique of merchants became the pique of nations. France entered into the war on the side of Holland; but the little assistance she gave the Dutch showed plainly enough, that her intention was to make these two powers waste their strength against one another, while she extended her conquests in the Spanish Low Countries. Her invasion in these provinces obliged De Wit to change his conduct. Hitherto he had been attached to France in the closest manner, had led his republick to serve all the purposes of France, and had renewed with the marshal d'Estrades a project of dividing the Spanish Netherlands between France and Holland, that had been taken up formerly, when Richelieu made use of it to flatter their ambition, and to engage

them to prolong the war against Spain. A project not unlike to that which was held out to them by the famous preliminaries, and the extravagant barrier treaty, in one thousand seven hundred and nine; and which engaged them to continue a war on the principle of ambition, into which they had entered with more reasonable and more moderate views.

As the private interests of the two De Wits hindered that commonwealth from being on her guard, as early as she ought to have been, against France, so the mistaken policy of the court of England, and the short views, and the profuse temper of the prince who governed, gave great advantages to Lewis the fourteenth in the pursuit of his designs. He bought Dunkirk: and your lordship knows how great a clamour was raised on that occasion against your noble ancestor; as if he alone had been answerable for the measure, and his interests had been concerned in it. I have heard our late friend Mr. George Clarke quote a witness, who was quite unexceptionable, but I cannot recal his name at present, who, many years after all these transactions, and the death of my lord Clarendon, affirmed, that the earl of Sandwich had owned to him, that he himself gave his opinion, among many others, officers, and ministers, for selling Dunkirk. Their reasons could not be good, I presume to say; but several, that might be plausible at that time, are easily guessed. A prince like Charles, who would have made as many bad bargains as any young spend-

thrift

thrift for money, finding himself thus backed, we may assure ourselves, was peremptorily determined to sell: and whatever your great-grandfather's opinion was, this I am able to pronounce upon my own experience, that his treaty for the sale is no proof he was of opinion to sell. When the resolution of selling was once taken, to whom could the sale be made? To the Dutch? No. This measure would have been at least as impolitick, and, in that moment, perhaps more odious than the other. To the Spaniards? They were unable to buy: and, as low as their power was sunk, the principle of opposing it still prevailed. I have sometimes thought that the Spaniards, who were forced to make peace with Portugal, and to renounce all claim to that crown, four or five years afterward, might have been induced to take this resolution then; if the regaining Dunkirk without any expense had been a condition proposed to them; and that the Portuguese, who, notwithstanding their alliance with England, and the indirect succours that France afforded them, were little able, after the treaty especially, to support a war against Spain, might have been induced to pay the price of Dunkirk, for so great an advantage as immediate peace with Spain, and the extinction of all foreign pretences on their crown. But this speculation concerning events so long ago passed is not much to the purpose here. I proceed therefore to observe, that notwithstanding the sale of Dunkirk, and the secret leanings of our court to that of France, yet

England was first to take the alarm, when Lewis the fourteenth invaded the Spanish Netherlands in one thousand six hundred and sixty-seven: and the triple alliance was the work of an English minister. It was time to take this alarm; for from the moment that the king of France claimed a right to the county of Burgundy, the duchy of Brabant, and other portions of the Low Countries that devolved on his queen by the death of her father Philip the fourth, he pulled off the mask entirely. Volumes were written to establish, and to refute this supposed right. Your lordship no doubt will look into a controversy, that has employed so many pens and so many swords; and I believe you will think it was sufficiently bold in the French, to argue from customs, that regulated the course of private successions in certain provinces, to a right of succeeding to the sovereignty of those provinces: and to assert the divisibility of the Spanish monarchy, with the same breath with which they asserted the indivisibility of their own; although the proofs in one case were just as good as the proofs in the other, and the fundamental law of indivisibility was at least as good a law in Spain, as either this or the Salique law was in France. But however proper it might be for the French and Austrian pens to enter into long discussions, and to appeal, on this great occasion, to the rest of Europe; the rest of Europe had a short objection to make to the plea of France, which no sophisms, no quirks of law could evade. Spain accepted

accepted the renunciations as a real security: France gave them as such to Spain, and in effect to the rest of Europe. If they had not been thus given, and thus taken, the Spaniards would not have married their Infanta to the king of France, whatever distress they might have endured by the prolongation of the war. These renunciations were renunciations of all rights whatsoever to the whole Spanish monarchy, and to every part of it. The provinces claimed by France at this time were parts of it. To claim them, was therefore to claim the whole; for if the renunciations were no bar to the rights accruing to Mary Theresa on the death of her father Philip the fourth, neither could they be any to the rights that would accrue to her and her children, on the death of her brother Charles the second: an unhealthful youth, and who at this instant was in immediate danger of dying; for to all the complicated distempers he brought into the world with him the small-pox was added. Your lordship sees how the fatal contingency of uniting the two monarchies of France and Spain stared mankind in the face; and yet nothing, that I can remember, was done to prevent it: not so much as a guaranty given, or a declaration made to assert the validity of these renunciations, and for securing the effect of them. The triple alliance indeed stopped the progress of the French arms, and produced the treaty of Aix la Chapelle. But England, Sweden, and Holland, the contracting powers in this alliance, seemed to look, and pro-

bably did look, no farther. France kept a great and important part of what she had surprised or ravished, or purchased; for we cannot say with any propriety that she conquered: and the Spaniards were obliged to set all they saved to the account of gain. The German branch of Austria had been reduced very low in power and in credit under Ferdinand the third, by the treaties of Westphalia, as I have said already. Lewis the fourteenth maintained, during many years, the influence these treaties had given him among the princes and states of the empire. The famous capitulation made at Frankfort on the election of Leopold, who succeeded Ferdinand about the year one thousand six hundred and fifty-seven, was encouraged by the intrigues of France: and the power of France was looked upon as the sole power that could ratify and secure effectually the observation of the conditions then made. The league of the Rhine was not renewed, I believe, after the year one thousand six hundred and sixty-six; but though this league was not renewed, yet some of these princes and states continued in their old engagements with France; while others took new engagements on particular occasions, according as private and sometimes very paltry interests, and the emissaries of France in all their little courts, disposed them. In short, the princes of Germany showed no alarm at the growing ambition and power of Lewis the fourteenth, but contributed to encourage one, and to confirm the other. In such a state of things the German

branch

branch was little able to assist the Spanish branch against France, either in the war that ended by the Pyrenean treaty, or in that we are speaking of here, the short war that began in one thousand six hundred and sixty-seven, and was ended by the treaty of Aix la Chapelle in one thousand six hundred and sixty-eight. But it was not this alone that disabled the emperor from acting with vigour in the cause of his family then, nor that has rendered the house of Austria a dead weight upon all her allies ever since. Bigotry, and it's inseparable companion, cruelty, as well as the tyranny and avarice of the court of Vienna, created in those days, and has maintained in ours, almost a perpetual diversion of the imperial arms from all effectual opposition to France. I mean to speak of the troubles in Hungary. Whatever they became in their progress, they were caused originally by the usurpations and persecutions of the emperor: and when the Hungarians were called rebels first, they were called so for no other reason than this, that they would not be slaves. The dominion of the emperor being less supportable than that of the Turks, this unhappy people opened a door to the latter to infest the empire, instead of making their country what it had been before, a barrier against the Ottoman power. France became a sure, though secret ally of the Turks, as well as the Hungarians, and has found her account in it, by keeping the emperor in perpetual alarms on that side, while she has ravaged the empire and the Low Countries on the

other. Thus we saw, thirty-two years ago, the arms of France and Bavaria in possession of Passau, and the malecontents of Hungary in the suburbs of Vienna. In a word, when Lewis the fourteenth made the first essay of his power, by the war of one thousand six hundred and sixty-seven, and sounded, as it were, the councils of Europe concerning his pretensions on the Spanish succession, he found his power to be great beyond what his neighbours, or even he perhaps thought it: great by the wealth, and greater by the united spirit of his people; greater still by the ill policy and divided interests, that governed those who had a superior common interest to oppose him. He found that the members of the triple alliance did not see, or seeing did not think proper to own that they saw, the injustice, and the consequence of his pretensions. They contented themselves to give to Spain an act of guaranty for securing the execution of the treaty of Aix la Chapelle. He knew even then how ill the guaranty would be observed by two of them at least, by England and by Sweden. The treaty itself was nothing more than a composition between the bully and the bullied. Tournay, and Lisle, and Doway, and other places that I have forgot, were yielded to him: and he restored the county of Burgundy, according to the option that Spain made, against the interest and the expectation too of the Dutch, when an option was forced upon her. The king of Spain compounded for his possession: but the emperor compounded at the same time for his succession,

succession, by a private eventual treaty of partition, which the commander of Gremonville and the count of Aversberg signed at Vienna. The same Leopold, who exclaimed so loudly, in one thousand six hundred and ninety-eight, against any partition of the Spanish monarchy, and refused to submit to that which England and Holland had then made, made one himself in one thousand six hundred and sixty-eight, with so little regard to these two powers, that the whole ten provinces were thrown into the lot of France.

There is no room to wonder if such experience as Lewis the fourteenth had upon this occasion, and such a face of affairs in Europe, raising his hopes, raised his ambition: and if, in making peace at Aix la Chapelle, he meditated a new war, the war of one thousand six hundred and seventy-two; the preparations he made for it, by negotiations in all parts, by alliances wherever he found ingression, and by the increase of his forces, were equally proofs of ability, industry, and power. I shall not descend into these particulars: your lordship will find them pretty well detailed in the memorials of that time. But one of the alliances he made I must mention, though I mention it with the utmost regret and indignation. England was fatally engaged to act a part in this conspiracy against the peace and the liberty of Europe, nay, against her own peace and her own liberty; for a bubble's part it was, equally wicked and impolitick. Forgive the terms I use, my lord: none can be too strong. The principles of the triple alliance, just, and wise, and worthy

worthy of a king of England, were laid aside. Then, the progress of the French arms was to be checked, the ten provinces were to be saved, and by saving them the barrier of Holland was to be preserved. Now, we joined our counsels and our arms to those of France, in a project that could not be carried on at all, as it was easy to foresee, and as the event ſhowed, unless it was carried on against Spain, the emperor, and most of the princes of Germany, as well as the Dutch; and which could not be carried on successfully, without leaving the ten provinces entirely at the mercy of France, and giving her pretence and opportunity of ravaging the empire, and extending her conquests on the Rhine. The medal of Van Beuninghen, and other pretences that France took for attacking the states of the Low Countries, were ridiculous. They imposed on no one: and the true object of Lewis the fourteenth was manifest to all. But what could a king of England mean? Charles the second had reasons of resentment against the Dutch, and just ones too no doubt. Among the rest, it was not easy for him to forget the affront he had suffered, and the loss he had sustained, when, depending on the peace that was ready to be signed, and that was signed at Breda in July, he neglected to fit out his fleet; and when that of Holland, commanded by Ruyter, with Cornelius de Wit on board as deputy or commissioner of the states, burnt his ships at Chatham in June. The famous perpetual edict, as it was called, but did not prove in the event,

event, against the election of a stadtholder, which John de Wit promoted, carried, and obliged the prince of Orange to swear to maintain a very few days after the conclusion of the peace at Breda, might be another motive in the breast of king Charles the second: as it was certainly a pretence of revenge on the Dutch, or at least on the De Wits and the Louvestein faction, that ruled almost despotically in that commonwealth. But it is plain that neither these reasons, nor others of a more ancient date, determined him to this alliance with France; since he contracted the triple alliance within four or five months after the two events, I have mentioned, happened. What then did he mean? Did he mean to acquire one of the seven provinces, and divide them, as the Dutch had twice treated for the division of the ten, with France? I believe not; but this I believe, that his inclinations were favourable to the popish interest in general, and that he meant to make himself more absolute at home; that he thought it necessary to this end to humble the Dutch, to reduce their power, and perhaps to change the form of their government; to deprive his subjects of the correspondence with a neighbouring protestant and free state, and of all hope of succour and support from thence in their opposition to him; in a word to abet the designs of France on the continent, that France might abet his designs on his own kingdom. This, I say, I believe; and this I should venture to affirm, if I had in my hands to produce, and was at liberty to quote, the private relations

relations I have read formerly, drawn up by those who were no enemies to such designs, and on the authority of those who were parties to them. But whatever king Charles the second meant, certain it is, that his conduct established the superiority of France in Europe.

But this charge, however, must not be confined to him alone. Those who were nearer the danger, those who were exposed to the immediate attacks of France, and even those who were her rivals for the same succession, having either assisted her, or engaged to remain neuters, a strange fatality prevailed, and produced such a conjuncture as can hardly be parallelled in history. Your lordship will observe with astonishment, even in the beginning of the year one thousand six hundred and seventy-two, all the neighbours of France, acting as if they had nothing to fear from her, and some as if they had much to hope, by helping her to oppress the Dutch and sharing with her the spoils of that commonwealth. "Delenda est Carthago," was the cry in England, and seemed too a maxim on the continent.

In the course of the same year, you will observe that all these powers took the alarm, and began to unite in opposition to France. Even England thought it time to interpose in favour of the Dutch. The consequences of this alarm, of this sudden turn in the policy of Europe, and of that which happened, by the massacre of the De Wits, and the elevation of the prince of Orange, in the government of the seven provinces, saved these provinces,

provinces, and stopped the rapid progress of the arms of France. Lewis the fourteenth indeed surprised the seven provinces in this war, as he had surprised the ten in that of one thousand six hundred and sixty-seven, and ravaged defenceless countries with armies sufficient to conquer them, if they had been prepared to resist. In the war of one thousand six hundred and seventy-two, he had little less than one hundred and fifty thousand men on foot, beside the bodies of English, Swiss, Italians, and Swedes, that amounted to thirty or forty thousand more. With this mighty force he took forty places in forty days, imposed extravagant conditions of peace, played the monarch a little while at Utrecht; and as soon as the Dutch recovered from their consternation, and, animated by the example of the prince of Orange and the hopes of succour, refused these conditions, he went back to Versailles, and left his generals to carry on his enterprise: which they did with so little success, that Grave and Maestricht alone remained to him of all the boasted conquests he had made; and even these he offered two years afterward to restore, if by that concession he could have prevailed on the Dutch at that time to make peace with him. But they were not yet disposed to abandon their allies; for allies now they had. The emperor and the king of Spain had engaged in the quarrel against France, and many of the princes of the empire had done the same. Not all. The Bavarian continued obstinate in his neutrality, and, to mention no more, the Swedes made

made a great diversion in favour of France in the empire; where the duke of Hanover abetted their designs as much as he could, for he was a zealous partisan of France, though the other princes of his house acted for the common cause. I descend into no more particulars. The war that Lewis the fourteenth kindled by attacking in so violent a manner the Dutch commonwealth, and by making so arbitrary a use of his first success, became general, in the Low Countries, in Spain, in Sicily, on the upper and lower Rhine, in Denmark, in Sweden, and in the provinces of Germany belonging to these two crowns; on the Mediterranean, the Ocean, and the Baltic. France supported this war with advantage on every side: and when your lordship considers in what manner it was carried on against her, you will not be surprised that she did so. Spain had spirit, but too little strength to maintain her power in Sicily, where Messina had revolted; to defend her frontier on that side of the Pyrenées; and to resist the great efforts of the French in the Low Countries. The empire was divided; and, even among the princes who acted against France, there was neither union in their councils, nor concert in their projects, nor order in preparations, nor vigour in execution: and, to say the truth, there was not, in the whole confederacy, a man whose abilities could make him a match for the prince of Condé or the marshal of Turenne; nor many who were in any degree equal to Luxemburg, Crequi, Schomberg, and other generals of inferiour note, who commanded the armies

armies of France. The emperor took this very time to make new invasions on the liberties of Hungary, and to oppress his protestant subjects. The prince of Orange alone acted with invincible firmness, like a patriot, and a hero. Neither the seductions of France nor those of England, neither the temptations of ambition nor those of private interest, could make him swerve from the true interest of his country, nor from the common interest of Europe. He had raised more sieges, and lost more battles, it was said, than any general of his age had done. Be it so. But his defeats were manifestly due in great measure to circumstances independent on him: and that spirit, which even these defeats could not depress, was all his own. He had difficulties in his own commonwealth; the governors of the Spanish Low Countries crossed his measures sometimes; the German allies disappointed and broke them often: and it is not improbable that he was frequently betrayed. He was so perhaps even by Souches, the imperial general; a Frenchman according to Bayle, and a pensioner of Louvois according to common report, and very strong appearances. He had not yet credit and authority sufficient to make him a centre of union to a whole confederacy, the soul that animated and directed so great a body. He came to be such afterward; but at the time spoken of, he could not take so great a part upon him. No other prince or general was equal to it: and the consequences of this defect appeared almost in every operation. France was surrounded by a multitude

often uncertain, and always expensive. Spain was already indebted to Holland for great sums; greater still must be advanced to her if the war continued: and experience showed that France was able, and would continue, to prevail against her present enemies. The triple league had stopped her progress, and obliged her to abandon the county of Burgundy; but Sweden was now engaged in the war on the side of France, as England had been in the beginning of it: and England was now privately favourable to her interests, as Sweden had been in the beginning of it. The whole ten provinces would have been subdued in the course of a few campaigns more: and it was better for Spain and the Dutch too, that part should be saved by accepting a sort of composition, than the whole be risked by refusing it. This might be alleged to excuse the conduct of the States General, in imposing hard terms on Spain; in making none for their other allies, and in signing alone: by which steps they gave France an opportunity that she improved with great dexterity of management, the opportunity of treating with the confederates one by one, and of beating them by detail in the cabinet, if I may so say, as she had often done in the field. I shall not compare these reasons, which were but too well founded in fact, and must appear plausible at least, with other considerations that might be, and were at the time, insisted upon. I confine myself to a few observations, which every knowing and impartial man must admit. Your lordship will observe, first,

that the fatal principle of compounding with Lewis the fourteenth, from the time that his pretensions, his power, and the use he made of it, began to threaten Europe, prevailed still more at Nimeghen than it had prevailed at Aix: so that although he did not obtain to the full all he attempted, yet the dominions of France were by common consent, on every treaty, more and more extended; her barriers on all sides were more and more strengthened; those of her neighbours were more and more weakened; and that power, which was to assert one day, against the rest of Europe, the pretended rights of the house of Bourbon to the Spanish monarchy, was more and more established, and rendered truly formidable in such hands at least, during the course of the first eighteen years of the period. Your lordship will please to observe, in the second place, that the extreme weakness of one branch of Austria, and the miserable conduct of both; the poverty of some of the princes of the empire, and the disunion, and to speak plainly, the mercenary policy of all of them; in short, the confined views, the false notions, and, to speak as plainly of my own as of other nations, the iniquity of the councils of England, not only hindered the growth of this power from being stopped in time, but nursed it up into strength almost insuperable by any future confederacy. A third observation is this: If the excuses made for the conduct of the Dutch at Nimeghen are not sufficient, they too must come in for their share in this condemnation, even after the death of the De

Wits; as they were to be condemned most justly, during their administration, for abetting and favouring France. If these excuses, grounded on their inability to pursue any longer a war, the principal profit of which was to accrue to their confederates, for that was the case after the year one thousand six hundred and seventy-three, or one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, and the principal burden of which was thrown on them by their confederates; if these are sufficient, they should not have acted, for decency's sake as well as out of good policy, the part they did act in one thousand seven hundred and eleven, and one thousand seven hundred and twelve, towards the late queen, who had complaints of the same kind, in a much higher degree and with circumstances much more aggravating, to make of them, of the emperor, and of all the princes of Germany; and who was far from treating them and their other allies, at that time, as they treated Spain and their other allies in one thousand six hundred and seventy-eight. Immediately after the Dutch had made their peace, that of Spain was signed with France. The emperor's treaty with this crown and that of Sweden was concluded in the following year: and Lewis the fourteenth being now at liberty to assist his ally, while he had tied up the powers with whom he had treated from assisting theirs, he soon forced the king of Denmark and the elector of Brandenburg to restore all they had taken from the Swedes, and to conclude the peace of the north. In all these treaties he gave the law, and he was now at

the highest point of his grandeur. He continued at this point for several years, and in this heighth of his power he prepared those alliances against it, under the weight of which he was at last well-nigh oppressed; and might have been reduced as low as the general interest of Europe required, if some of the causes, which worked now, had not continued to work in his favour, and if his enemies had not proved, in their turn of fortune, as insatiable as prosperity had rendered him.

After he had made peace with all the powers with whom he had been in war, he continued to vex both Spain and the empire, and to extend his conquests in the Low Countries, and on the Rhine, both by the pen and the sword. He erected the chambers of Metz and of Brisach, where his own subjects were prosecutors, witnesses, and judges all at once. Upon the decisions of these tribunals, he seized into his own hands, under the notion of dependencies and the pretence of reunions, whatever towns or districts of country tempted his ambition, or suited his conveniency: and added, by these and by other means, in the midst of peace, more territories to those the late treaties had yielded to him, than he could have got by continuing the war. He acted afterward, in the support of all this, without any bounds or limits. His glory was a reason for attacking Holland in one thousand six hundred and seventy-two, and his conveniency a reason for many of the attacks he made on others afterward. He took Luxemburg by force; he stole Strasburg; he bought

Casal: and, while he waited the opportunity of acquiring to his family the crown of Spain, he was not without thoughts, nor hopes perhaps, of bringing into it the imperial crown likewise. Some of the cruelties he exercised in the empire may be ascribed to his disappointment in this view: I say some of them, because in the war that ended by the treaty of Nimeghen, he had already exercised many. Though the French writers endeavour to slide over them, to palliate them, and to impute them particularly to the English that were in their service; for even this one of their writers has the front to advance: yet these cruelties, unheard of among civilized nations, must be granted to have been ordered by the counsels, and executed by the arms of France, in the Palatinate, and in other parts.

If Lewis the fourteenth could have contented himself with the acquisitions that were confirmed to him by the treaties of one thousand six hundred and seventy-eight, and one thousand six hundred and seventy-nine, and with the authority and reputation which he then gained; it is plain that he would have prevented the alliances that were afterward formed against him, and that he might have regained his credit among the princes of the empire, where he had one family alliance by the marriage of his brother to the daughter of the elector Palatine, and another by that of his son to the sister of the elector of Bavaria; where Sweden was closely attached to him, and where the same principles of private interest would have

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soon attached others as closely. He might have remained not only the principal, but the directing power of Europe, and have held this rank with all the glory imaginable, till the death of the king of Spain, or some other object of great ambition, had determined him to act another part. But instead of this, he continued to vex and provoke all those who were, unhappily for them, his neighbours, and that, in many instances, for trifles. An example of this kind occurs to me. On the death of the duke of Deux Ponts, he seized that little inconsiderable duchy, without any regard to the indisputable right of the king of Sweden, to the services that crown had rendered him, or to the want he might have of that alliance hereafter. The consequence was, that Sweden entered with the emperor, the king of Spain, the elector of Bavaria, and the States General, into the alliance of guaranty, as it was called, about the year one thousand six hundred and eighty-three, and into the famous league of Augsburg, in one thousand six hundred and eighty-six.

Since I have mentioned this league, and since we may date from it a more general, and more concerted opposition to France, than there had been before; give me leave to recal some of the reflections, that have presented themselves to my mind, in considering what I have read, and what I have heard related, concerning the passages of that time. They will be of use to form our judgment concerning later passages. If the king of France became an object of aversion on account

of any invasions he made, any deviations from publick faith, any barbarities exercised where his arms prevailed, or the persecution of his protestant subjects; the emperor deserved to be such an object, at least as much as he, on the same accounts. The emperor was so too, but with this difference relatively to the political system of the west: the Austrian ambition and bigotry exerted themselves in distant countries, whose interests were not considered as a part of this system; for otherwise there would have been as much reason for assisting the people of Hungary and of Transylvania against the emperor, as there had been formerly for assisting the people of the seven United Provinces against Spain, or as there had been lately for assisting them against France; but the ambition and bigotry of Lewis the fourteenth were exerted in the Low Countries, on the Rhine, in Italy, and in Spain, in the very midst of this system, if I may say so, and with success that could not fail to subvert it in time. The power of the house of Austria, that had been feared too long, was feared no longer: and that of the house of Bourbon, by having been feared too late, was now grown terrible. The emperor was so intent on the establishment of his absolute power in Hungary, that he exposed the empire doubly to desolation and ruin for the sake of it. He left the frontier almost quite defenceless on the side of the Rhine, against the inroads and ravages of France: and by showing no mercy to the Hungarians, nor keeping any faith with them,

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he forced that miserable people into alliances with the Turk, who invaded the empire, and besieged Vienna. Even this event had no effect upon him. Your lordship will find, that Sobieski, king of Poland, who had forced the Turks to raise the siege, and had fixed the imperial crown that tottered on his head, could not prevail on him to take those measures, by which alone it was possible to cover the empire, to secure the king of Spain, and to reduce that power who was probably one day to dispute with him this prince's succession. Tekeli and the malecontents made such demands as none but a tyrant could refuse, the preservation of their ancient privileges, liberty of conscience, the convocation of a free diet or parliament, and others of less importance. All was in vain. The war continued with them, and with the Turks, and France was left at liberty to push her enterprises, almost without opposition, against Germany and the Low Countries. The distress in both was so great, that the States General saw no other expedient for stopping the progress of the French arms, than a cessation of hostilities, or a truce of twenty years; which they negotiated, and which was accepted by the emperor and the king of Spain, on the terms that Lewis the fourteenth thought fit to offer. By these terms he was to remain in full and quiet possession of all he had acquired since the years one thousand six hundred and seventy-eight, and one thousand six hundred and seventy-nine; among which acquisitions that

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of Luxemburg and that of Strasburg were comprehended. The conditions of this truce were so advantageous to France, that all her intrigues were employed to obtain a definitive treaty of peace upon the same conditions. But this was neither the interest nor the intention of the other contracting powers. The imperial arms had been very successful against the Turks. This success, as well as the troubles that followed upon it in the Ottoman armies, and at the Porte, gave reasonable expectation of concluding a peace on that side: and, this peace concluded, the emperor, and the empire, and the king of Spain would have been in a much better posture to treat with France. With these views, that were wise and just, the league of Augsburg was made between the emperor, the kings of Spain and Sweden as princes of the empire, and the other circles and princes. This league was purely defensive. An express article declared it to be so: and as it had no other regard, it was not only conformable to the laws and constitutions of the empire, and to the practice of all nations, but even to the terms of the act of truce so lately concluded. This pretence therefore for breaking the truce, seizing the electorate of Cologn, invading the Palatinate, besieging Philipsburg, and carrying unexpected and undeclared war into the empire could not be supported: nor is it possible to read the reasons published by France at this time, and drawn from her fears of the imperial power, without laughter. As little pretence

pretence was there to complain, that the emperor refused to convert at once the truce into a definitive treaty; since if he had done so, he would have confirmed in a lump, and without any discussion, all the arbitrary decrees of those chambers, or courts, that France had erected to cover her usurpation; and would have given up almost a sixth part of the provinces of the empire, that France one way or other had possessed herself of. The pretensions of the duchess of Orleans on the succession of her father, and her brother, which were disputed by the then elector Palatine, and were to be determined by the laws and customs of the empire, afforded as little pretence for beginning this war, as any of the former allegations. The exclusion of the cardinal of Furstenberg, who had been elected to the archbishoprick of Cologn, was capable of being aggravated: but even in this case his most christian majesty opposed his judgment and his authority against the judgment and authority of that holy father, whose eldest son he was proud to be called. In short, the true reason why Lewis the fourteenth began that cruel war with the empire, two years after he had concluded a cessation of hostilities for twenty, was this: he resolved to keep what he had got; and therefore he resolved to encourage the Turks to continue the war. He did this effectually, by invading Germany at the very instant when the Sultan was suing for peace. Notwithstanding this, the Turks were in treaty again the following year:

year: and good policy should have obliged the emperor, since he could not hope to carry on this war and that against France, at the same time, with vigour and effect, to conclude a peace with the least dangerous enemy of the two. The decision of his disputes with France could not be deferred, his designs against the Hungarians were in part accomplished, for his son was declared king, and the settlement of that crown in his family was made; and the rest of these, as well as those that he formed against the Turks, might be deferred. But the councils of Vienna judged differently, and insisted even at this critical moment on the most exorbitant terms; on some of such a nature, that the Turks showed more humanity and a better sense of religion in refusing, than they in asking them. Thus the war went on in Hungary, and proved a constant diversion in favour of France, during the whole course of that which Lewis the fourteenth began at this time; for the treaty of Carlowitz was posterior to that of Ryswic. The empire, Spain, England, and Holland engaged in the war with France: and on them the emperor left the burden of it. In the short war of one thousand six hundred and sixty-seven, he was not so much as a party, and instead of assisting the king of Spain, which, it must be owned, he was in no good condition of doing, he bargained for dividing that prince's succession, as I have observed above. In the war of one thousand six hundred and seventy-two he made some feeble efforts,

efforts. In this of one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight he did still less: and in the war which broke out at the beginning of the present century he did nothing, at least after the first campaign in Italy, and after the engagements that England and Holland took by the grand alliance. In a word, from the time that an opposition to France became a common cause in Europe, the house of Austria has been a clog upon it in many instances, and of considerable assistance to it in none. The accession of England to this cause, which was brought about by the revolution of one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight, might have made amends, and more than amends, one would think, for this defect, and have thrown superiority of power and of success on the side of the confederates, with whom she took part against France. This, I say, might be imagined, without overrating the power of England, or undervaluing that of France; and it was imagined at that time. How it proved otherwise in the event; how France came triumphant out of the war that ended by the treaty of Ryswic, and though she gave up a great deal, yet preserved the greatest and the best part of her conquests and acquisitions made since the treaties of Westphalia, and the Pyrenées; how she acquired, by the gift of Spain, that whole monarchy for one of her princes, though she had no reason to expect the least part of it without a war at one time, nor the great lot of it even by a war at any time; in short, how she wound up advantageously the ambitious system she

she had been fifty years in weaving; how she concluded a war, in which she was defeated on every side, and wholly exhausted, with little diminution of the provinces and barriers acquired to France, and with the quiet possession of Spain and the Indies to a prince of the house of Bourbon: all this, my lord, will be the subject of your researches, when you come down to the latter part of the last period of modern history.

LETTER VIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED FROM THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHT.

Your lordship will find, that the objects proposed by the alliance of one thousand six hundred and eighty-nine between the emperor and the States, to which England acceded, and which was the foundation of the whole confederacy then formed, were no less than to restore all things to the terms of the Westphalian and Pyrenean treaties, by the war; and to preserve them in that state, after the war, by a defensive alliance and guaranty of the same confederate powers against France. The particular as well as general meaning of this engagement was plain enough: and if it had not been

been so, the sense of it would have been sufficiently determined, by that separate article, in which England and Holland obliged themselves to assist the "house of Austria, in taking and "keeping possession of the Spanish monarchy, "whenever the case should happen of the death of "Charles the second, without lawful heirs." This engagement was double, and thereby relative to the whole political system of Europe, alike affected by the power and pretensions of France. Hitherto the power of France had been alone regarded, and her pretensions seemed to have been forgot; or to what purpose should they have been remembered, while Europe was so unhappily constituted, that the states at whose expense she increased her power, and their friends and allies, thought that they did enough upon every occasion if they made some tolerable composition with her? They who were not in circumstances to refuse confirming present, were little likely to take effectual measures against future usurpations. But now, as the alarm was greater than ever, by the outrages that France had committed, and the intrigues she had carried on; by the little regard she had shown to publick faith, and by the airs of authority she had assumed twenty years together: so was the spirit against her raised to a higher pitch, and the means of reducing her power, or at least of checking it, were increased. The princes and states who had neglected or favoured the growth of this power, which all of them had done in their turns, saw their errour; saw the necessity

necessity of repairing it, and saw that unless they could check the power of France, by uniting a power superiour to hers, it would be impossible to hinder her from succeeding in her great designs on the Spanish succession. The court of England had submitted, not many years before, to abet her usurpations, and the king of England had stooped to be her pensioner. But the crime was not national. On the contrary, the nation had cried out loudly against it, even while it was committing: and as soon as ever the abdication of king James, and the elevation of the prince of Orange to the throne of England happened, the nation engaged with all imaginable zeal in the common cause of Europe, to reduce the exorbitant power of France, to prevent her future and to revenge her past attempts; for even a spirit of revenge prevailed, and the war was a war of anger as well as of interest.

Unhappily this zeal was neither well conducted, nor well seconded. It was zeal without success in the first of the two wars that followed the year one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight; and zeal without knowledge, in both of them. I enter into no detail concerning the events of these two wars. This only I observe on the first of them, that the treaties of Ryswic were far from answering the ends proposed and the engagements taken by the first grand alliance. The power of France, with respect to extent of dominions and strength of barrier, was not reduced to the terms of the Pyrenean treaty, no not to those of the treaty of Nimeghen.

Nimeghen. Lorrain was restored indeed with very considerable reserves, and the places taken or usurped on the other side of the Rhine; but then Strasburgh was yielded up absolutely to France by the emperor, and by the empire. The concessions to Spain were great, but so were the conquests and the encroachments made upon her by France, since the treaty of Nimeghen: and she got little at Ryswic, I believe nothing more than she had saved at Nimeghen before. All these concessions, however, as well as the acknowledgment of king William, and others made by Lewis the fourteenth after he had taken Ath and Barcelona, even during the course of the negotiations, compared with the losses and repeated defeats of the allies and the ill state of the confederacy, surprised the generality of mankind, who had not been accustomed to so much moderation and generosity on the part of this prince. But the pretensions of the house of Bourbon on the Spanish succession remained the same. Nothing had been done to weaken them; nothing was prepared to oppose them: and the opening of this succession was visibly at hand; for Charles the second had been in immediate danger of dying about this time. His death could not be a remote event: and all the good queen's endeavours to be got with child had proved ineffectual. The league dissolved, all the forces of the confederates dispersed, and many disbanded; France continuing armed, her forces by sea and land increased and held in readiness to act on all sides, it was plain

that the confederates had failed in the first object of the grand alliance, that of reducing the power of France; by succeeding in which alone they could have been able to keep the second engagement, that of securing the succession of Spain to the house of Austria.

After this peace, what remained to be done? In the whole nature of things there remained but three. To abandon all care of the Spanish succession was one; to compound with France upon this succession was another; and to prepare, like her, during the interval of peace, to make an advantageous war whenever Charles the second should die, was a third. Now the first of these was to leave Spain, and, in leaving Spain, to leave all Europe in some sort at the mercy of France; since whatever disposition the Spaniards should make of their crown, they were quite unable to support it against France; since the emperor could do little without his allies; and since Bavaria, the third pretender, could do still less, and might find, in such a case, his account perhaps better in treating with the House of Bourbon than with that of Austria. More needs not be said on this head; but on the other two, which I shall consider together, several facts are proper to be mentioned, and several reflections necessary to be made.

We might have counterworked, no doubt, in their own methods of policy, the councils of France, who made peace to dissolve the confederacy, and great concessions, with very suspicious generosity, to gain the Spaniards: we might have

waited like them, that is in arms, the death of Charles the second, and have fortified in the mean time the dispositions of the king, the court, and people of Spain, against the pretensions of France: we might have made the peace, which was made some time after that, between the emperor and the Turks, and have obliged the former at any rate to have secured the peace of Hungary, and to have prepared, by these and other expedients, for the war that would inevitably break out on the death of the king of Spain.

But all such measures were rendered impracticable, by the emperor chiefly. Experience had shown, that the powers who engaged in alliance with him must expect to take the whole burden of his cause upon themselves; and that Hungary would maintain a perpetual diversion in favour of France, since he could not resolve to lighten the tyrannical yoke he had established in that country and in Transilvania, nor his ministers to part with the immense confiscations they had appropriated to themselves. Past experience showed this: and the experience that followed confirmed it very fatally. But further; there was not only little assistance to be expected from him by those who should engage in his quarrel: he did them hurt of another kind, and deprived them of many advantages by false measures of policy and unskilful negotiations. While the death of Charles the second was expected almost daily, the court of Vienna seemed to have forgot the court of Madrid, and all the pretensions on that crown.

When the count d'Harrach was sent thither, the imperial councils did something worse. The king of Spain was ready to declare the archduke Charles his successor; he was desirous to have this young prince sent into Spain: the bent of the people was in favour of Austria, or it had been so, and might have been easily turned the same way again: at court no cabal was yet formed in favour of Bourbon, and a very weak intrigue was on foot in favour of the electoral prince of Bavaria. Not only Charles might have been on the spot ready to reap the succession, but a German army might have been there to defend it; for the court of Madrid insisted on having twelve thousand of these troops, and, rather than not have them, offered to contribute to the payment of them privately: because it would have been too impopular among the Spaniards, and too prejudicial to the Austrian interest, to have had it known, that the emperor declined the payment of a body of his own troops, that were demanded to secure that monarchy to his son. These proposals were half refused, and half evaded: and in return to the offer of the crown of Spain to the archduke, the imperial councils asked the government of Milan for him. They thought it a point of deep policy to secure the Italian provinces, and to leave to England and Holland the care of the Low Countries, of Spain, and the Indies. By declining these proposals the house of Austria renounced in some sort the whole succession; at least she gave England and Holland reasons, whatever engagements these powers had

taken,

taken, to refuse the harder task of putting her into possession by force; when she might, and would not, procure to the English and Dutch, and her other allies, the easier task of defending her in this possession.

I said that the measures mentioned above were rendered impracticable, by the emperor chiefly, because they were rendered so likewise by other circumstances at the same conjuncture. A principal one I shall mention, and it shall be drawn from the state of our own country, and the disposition of our people. Let us take this up from king William's accession to our crown. During the whole progress that Lewis the fourteenth made towards such exorbitant power, as gave him well-grounded hopes of acquiring at last to his family the Spanish monarchy, England had been either an idle spectator of all that passed on the continent, or a faint and uncertain ally against France, or a warm and sure ally on her side, or a partial mediator between her and the powers confederated in their common defence. The revolution produced as great a change in our foreign conduct, as in our domestick establishment: and our nation engaged with great spirit in the war of one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight. But then this spirit was rash, presumptuous, and ignorant, ill conducted at home, and ill seconded abroad: all which has been touched already. We had waged no long wars on the continent, nor been very deeply concerned in foreign confederacies, since the fourteenth and

uniting with the far greater number of those who disliked the administration, inflamed the general discontents of the nation, oppressed with taxes, pillaged by usurers, plundered at sea, and disappointed at land. As we run into extremes always, some would have continued this war at any rate, even at the same rate, but it was not possible they should prevail in such a situation of affairs, and such a disposition of minds. They who got by the war, and made immense fortunes by the necessities of the publick, were not so numerous nor so powerful, as they have been since. The moneyed interest was not yet a rival able to cope with the landed interest, either in the nation or in parliament. The great corporations that had been erected more to serve the turn of party, than for any real national use, aimed indeed even then at the strength and influence which they have since acquired in the legislature; but they had not made the same progress by promoting national corruption, as they and the court have made since. In short, the other extreme prevailed. The generality of people grew as fond of getting out of the war, as they had been of entering into it: and thus far perhaps, considering how it had been conducted, they were not much to be blamed. But this was not all; for when king William had made the peace, our martial spirit became at once so pacifick, that we seemed resolved to meddle no more in the affairs of the continent, at least to employ our arms no more in the quarrels that might

might arise there: and accordingly we reduced our troops in England to seven thousand men.

I have sometimes considered, in reflecting on these passages, what I should have done, if I had sat in parliament at that time; and have been forced to own myself, that I should have voted for disbanding the army then; as I voted in the following parliament for censuring the partition treaties. I am forced to own this, because I remember how imperfect my notions were of the situation of Europe in that extraordinary crisis, and how much I saw the true interest of my own country in a half-light. But, my lord, I own it with some shame; because in truth nothing could be more absurd than the conduct we held. What! because we had not reduced the power of France by the war, nor excluded the house of Bourbon from the Spanish succession, nor compounded with her upon it by the peace; and because the house of Austria had not helped herself, nor put it into our power to help her with more advantage and better prospect of success—were we to leave that whole succession open to the invasions of France, and to suffer even the contingency to subsist, of seeing those monarchies united? What! because it was become extravagant, after the trials so lately made, to think ourselves any longer engaged by treaty, or obliged by good policy, to put the house of Austria in possession of the whole Spanish monarchy, and to defend her in this

this possession by force of arms, were we to leave the whole at the mercy of France? If we were not to do so, if we were not to do one of the three things that I said above remained to be done, and if the emperor put it out of our power to do another of them with advantage; were we to put it still more out of our power, and to wait unarmed for the death of the king of Spain? In fine, if we had not the prospect of disputing with France, so successfully as we might have had it, the Spanish succession, whenever it should be open; were we not only to show by disarming, that we would not dispute it at all, but to censure likewise the second of the three things mentioned above, and which king William put in practice, the compounding with France, to prevent if possible a war, in which we were averse to engage?

Allow me to push these reflections a little further, and to observe to your lordship, that if the proposal of sending the archduke into Spain had been accepted in time by the imperial court, and taken effect and become a measure of the confederacy, that war indeed would have been protracted; but France could not have hindered the passage of this prince and his German forces: and our fleet would have been better employed in escorting them, and in covering the coasts of Spain and of the dominions of that crown both in Europe and in America, than it was in so many unmeaning expeditions from the battle of La Hogue

Hogue to the end of the war. France indeed would have made her utmost efforts to have had satisfaction on her pretensions, as ill founded as they were. She would have ended that war, as we began the next, when we demanded a reasonable satisfaction for the emperor: and though I think that the allies would have had, in very many respects, more advantage in defending Spain, than in attacking France; yet, upon a supposition that the defence would have been as ill conducted as the attack was, and that by consequence, whether Charles the second had lived to the conclusion of this war, or had died before it, the war must have ended in some partition or other; this partition would have been made by the Spaniards themselves. They had been forced to compound with France on her former pretensions, and they must and they would have compounded on these, with an Austrian prince on the throne, just as they compounded, and probably much better than they compounded, on the pretensions we supported against them, when they had a Prince of Bourbon on their throne. France could not have distressed the Spaniards, nor have overrun their monarchy, if they had been united; and they would have been united in this case, and supported by the whole confederacy: as we distressed both France and them, overrun their monarchy in one hemisphere, and might have done so in both, when they were disunited, and supported by France alone. France would not have acted, in such negotiations, the ridiculous part which the emperor

emperor acted in those that led to the peace of Utrecht, nor have made her bargain worse by neglecting to make it in time. But the war ending as it did, though I cannot see how king William could avoid leaving the crown of Spain and that entire monarchy at the discretion of Lewis the fourteenth, otherwise than by compounding to prevent a new war he was in no sort prepared to make; yet it is undeniable, that by consenting to a partition of their monarchy, he threw the Spaniards into the arms of France. The first partition might have taken place, perhaps, if the electoral prince of Bavaria had lived, whom the French and Spaniards too would have seen much more willingly than the archduke on the throne of Spain. For among all the parties into which that court was divided in one thousand six hundred and ninety-eight, when this treaty was made, that of Austria was grown the weakest, by the disgust taken at a German queen, and at the rapacity and insolence of her favourites. The French were looked upon with esteem and kindness at Madrid; but the Germans were become, or growing to be, objects of contempt to the ministers, and of aversion to the people. The electoral prince died in one thousand six hundred and ninety-nine. The star of Austria, so fatal to all those who were obstacles to the ambition of that house, prevailed; as the elector expressed himself in the first pangs of his grief. The state of things changed very much by this death. The archduke was to have Spain and the Indies, according

cording to a second partition: and the Spaniards, who had expressed great resentment at the first, were pushed beyond their bearing by this. They soon appeared to be so; for the second treaty of partition was signed in March one thousand seven hundred; and the will was made, to the best of my remembrance, in the October following. I shall not enter here into many particulars concerning these great events. They will be related faithfully, and I hope fully explained, in a work which your lordship may take the trouble very probably of perusing some time or other, and which I shall rather leave, than give to the publick. Something however must be said more, to continue and wind up this summary of the latter period of modern history.

France then saw her advantage, and improved it no doubt, though not in the manner, nor with the circumstances, that some lying scribblers of memorials and anecdotes have advanced. She had sent one of the ablest men of her court to that of Madrid, the marshal of Harcourt, and she had stipulated in the second treaty of partition, that the archduke should go neither into Spain nor the duchy of Milan, during the life of Charles the second. She was willing to have her option between a treaty and a will. By the acceptation of the will, all king William's measures were broke. He was unprepared for war as much as when he made these treaties to prevent one; and if he meant in making them, what some wise, but refining men have suspected, and what I confess I see

see no reason to believe, only to gain time by the difficulty of executing them, and to prepare for making war, whenever the death of the king of Spain should alarm mankind, and rouze his own subjects out of their inactivity and neglect of foreign interests: if so, he was disappointed in that too; for France took possession of the whole monarchy at once, and with universal concurrence, at least without opposition or difficulty, in favour of the duke of Anjou. By what has been observed, or hinted rather very shortly, and I fear a little confusedly, it is plain that reducing the power of France, and securing the whole Spanish succession to the house of Austria, were two points that king William, at the head of the British and Dutch commonwealths and of the greatest confederacy Europe had seen, was obliged to give up. All the acquisitions that France cared to keep for the maintenance of her power were confirmed to her by the treaty of Ryswic: and king William allowed, indirectly at least, the pretensions of the house of Bourbon to the Spanish succession, as Lewis the fourteenth allowed, in the same manner, those of the house of Austria, by the treaties of partition. Strange situation! in which no expedient remained to prepare for an event, visibly so near, and of such vast importance as the death of the king of Spain, but a partition of his monarchy, without his consent, or his knowledge! If king William had not made this partition, the emperor would have made one, and with as little regard to trade, to the barrier of the Seven Provinces,

vinces, or to the general system of Europe, as had been showed by him when he made the private treaty with France already mentioned, in one thousand six hundred and sixty-eight. The ministers of Vienna were not wanting to insinuate to those of France overtures of a separate treaty, as more conducive to their common interests than the accession of his imperial majesty to that of partition. But the councils of Versailles judged very reasonably, that a partition made with England and Holland would be more effectual than any other, if a partition was to take place: and that such a partition would be just as effectual as one made with the emperor, to furnish arguments to the emissaries of France, and motives to the Spanish councils, if a will in favour of France could be obtained. I repeat it again; I cannot see what king William could do in such circumstances as he found himself in after thirty years struggle, except what he did: neither can I see how he could do what he did, especially after the resentment expressed by the Spaniards, and the furious memorial presented by Cazales on the conclusion of the first treaty of partition, without apprehending that the consequence would be a will in favour of France. He was in the worst of all political circumstances, in that wherein no one good measure remains to be taken; and out of which he left the two nations, at the head of whom he had been so long, to fight and negotiate themselves and their confederates, as well as they could.

When

When this will was made and accepted, Lewis the fourteenth had succeeded, and the powers in opposition to him had failed, in all the great objects of interest and ambition, which they had kept in sight for more than forty years; that is from the beginning of the present period. The actors changed their parts in the tragedy that followed. The power, that had so long and so cruelly attacked, was now to defend, the Spanish monarchy: and the powers that had so long defended, were now to attack it. Let us see how this was brought about: and that we may see it the better, and make a better judgment of all that passed from the death of Charles the second to the peace of Utrecht, let us go back to the time of his death, and consider the circumstances that formed this complicated state of affairs, in three views, a view of right, a view of policy, and a view of power.

The right of succeeding to the crown of Spain would have been undoubtedly in the children of Maria Theresa, that is, in the house of Bourbon; if this right had not been barred by the solemn renunciations so often mentioned. The pretensions of the house of Austria were founded on these renunciations, on the ratification of them by the Pyrenean treaty, and the confirmation of them by the will of Philip the fourth. The pretensions of the house of Bourbon were founded on a supposition, it was indeed no more, and a vain one too, that these renunciations were in their nature null. On this foot the dispute of

right

right stood during the life of Charles the second, and on the same it would have continued to stand even after his death, if the renunciations had remained unshaken; if his will, like that of his father, had confirmed them, and had left the crown, in pursuance of them to the house of Austria. But the will of Charles the second, annulling these renunciations, took away the sole foundation of the Auſtrian pretensions; for, however this act might be obtained, it was just as valid as his father's, and was confirmed by the universal concurrence of the Spanish nation to the new settlement he made of that crown. Let it be, as I think it ought to be, granted, that the true heirs could not claim against renunciations that were, if I may so say, conditions of their birth: but Charles the second had certainly as good a right to change the course of succession agreeably to the order of nature and the constitution of that monarchy, after his true heirs were born, as Philip the fourth had to change it, contrary to this order and this constitution, before they were born, or at any other time. He had as good a right, in short, to dispense with the Pyrenean treaty, and to set it aside in this respect, as his father had to make it: so that the renunciations being annulled by that party to the Pyrenean treaty who had exacted them, they could be deemed no longer binding, by virtue of this treaty, on the party who had made them. The sole question that remained therefore between these rival houses, as to right, was this, whether the engagements taken by

Lewis the fourteenth in the partition treaties obliged him to adhere to the terms of the last of them in all events, and to deprive his family of the succession which the king of Spain opened, and the Spanish nation offered to them; rather than to depart from a composition he had made, on pretensions that were disputable then, but were now out of dispute. It may be said, and it was said, that the treaties of partition being absolute, without any condition or exception relative to any disposition the king of Spain had made or might make of his succession, in favour of Bourbon or Austria; the disposition made by his will, in favour of the duke of Anjou, could not affect the engagements so lately taken by Lewis the fourteenth in these treaties, nor dispense with a literal observation of them. This might be true, on strict principles of justice; but I apprehend that none of these powers, who exclaimed so loudly against the perfidy of France in this case, would have been more scrupulous in a parallel case. The maxim, "summum jus est summa injuria," would have been quoted, and the rigid letter of treaties would have been softened by an equitable interpretation of their spirit and intention. His imperial majesty, above all, had not the least colour of right to exclaim against France on this occasion; for in general if his family was to be stripped of all the dominions they have acquired by breach of faith, and means much worse than the acceptation of the will, even allowing all the invidious circumstances imputed to the conduct

of

of France to be true, the Austrian family would sink from their present grandeur to that low state they were in two or three centuries ago. In particular, the emperor, who had constantly refused to accede to the treaties of partition, or to submit to the dispositions made by them, had not the least plausible pretence to object to Lewis the fourteenth, that he departed from them. Thus, I think, the right of the two houses stood on the death of Charles the second. The right of the Spaniards, an independent nation, to regulate their own succession, or to receive the prince whom their dying monarch had called to it; and the right of England and Holland to regulate this succession, to divide and parcel out this monarchy in different lots; it would be equally foolish to go about to establish. One is too evident, the other too absurd, to admit of any proof. But enough has been said concerning right, which was in truth little regarded by any of the parties concerned immediately or remotely in the whole course of these proceedings. Particular interests were alone regarded, and these were pursued as ambition, fear, resentment, and vanity directed: I mean the ambition of the two houses contending for superiority of power: the fear of England and Holland lest this superiority should become too great in either; the resentment of Spain at the dismemberment of that monarchy projected by the partition-treaties; and the vanity of that nation, as well as of the princes of the house of Bourbon: for as vanity mingled with resentment

to make the will, vanity had a great share in determining the acceptation of it.

Let us now consider the same conjuncture in a view of policy. The policy of the Spanish councils was this. They could not brook that their monarchy should be divided: and this principle is expressed strongly in the will of Charles the second, where he exhorts his subjects not to suffer any dismemberment or diminution of a monarchy founded by his predecessors with so much glory. Too weak to hinder this dismemberment by their own strength, too well apprised of the little force and little views of the court of Vienna, and their old allies having engaged to procure this dismemberment even by force of arms: nothing remained for them to do upon this principle, but to detach France from the engagements of the partition-treaties, by giving their whole monarchy to a prince of the house of Bourbon. As much as may have been said concerning the negotiations of France to obtain a will in her favour, and yet to keep in reserve the advantages stipulated for her by the partition-treaties, if such a will could not be obtained; and though I am persuaded that the marshal of Harcourt, who helped to procure this will, made his court to Lewis the fourteenth as much as the marshal of Tallard, who negotiated the partitions; yet it is certain, that the acceptation of the will was not a measure definitively taken at Versailles when the king of Spain died. The alternative divided those councils, and, without entering at this time into the arguments urged on

each

each side, adhering to the partitions seemed the cause of France, accepting the will that of the house of Bourbon.

It has been said by men of great weight in the councils of Spain, and was said at that time by men as little fond of the house of Bourbon, or of the French nation, as their fathers had been, that if England and Holland had not formed a confederacy and begun a war, they would have made Philip the fifth as good a Spaniard as any of the preceding Philips, and not have endured the influence of French councils in the administration of their government: but that we threw them intirely into the hands of France when we began the war, because the fleets and armies of this crown being necessary to their defence, they could not avoid submitting to this influence as long as the same necessity continued; and, in fact, we have seen, that the influence lasted no longer. But notwithstanding this, it must be confessed, that a war was unavoidable. The immediate securing of commerce and of barriers, the preventing a union of the two monarchies in some future time, and the preservation of a certain degree at least of equality in the scales of power, were points too important to England, Holland, and the rest of Europe, to be rested on the moderation of French, and the vigour of Spanish councils, under a prince of the house of France. If satisfaction to the house of Austria, to whose rights England and Holland showed no great regard while they were better founded than they

were since the will, had been alone concerned; a drop of blood spilt, or five shillings spent in the quarrel, would have been too much profusion. But this was properly the scale into which it became the common interest to throw all the weight, that could be taken out of that of Bourbon. And therefore your lordship will find, that when negotiations with d'Avaux were set on foot in Holland to prevent a war, or rather on our part to gain time to prepare for it, in which view the Dutch and we had both acknowledged Philip king of Spain; the great article we insisted on was, that reasonable satisfaction should be given the emperor, upon his pretensions founded on the treaty of partition. We could do no otherwise; and France, who offered to make the treaty of Ryswic the foundation of that treaty, could do no otherwise than refuse to consent, that the treaty of partition should be so, after accepting the will, and thereby engaging to oppose all partition or dismemberment of the Spanish monarchy. I should mention none of the other demands of England and Holland, if I could neglect to point out to your lordship's observation, that the same artifice was employed at this time, to perplex the more a negotiation that could not succeed on other accounts, as we saw employed in the course of the war, by the English and Dutch ministers, to prevent the success of negotiations that might and ought to have succeeded. The demand I mean is that of "a liberty not only to explain the terms "proposed, but to increase or amplify them, in

"the

"the course of the negotiation." I do not remember the words, but this is the sense, and this was the meaning of the confederates in both cases.

In the former, king William was determined to begin the war by all the rules of good policy; since he could not obtain, nay since France could not grant in that conjuncture, nor without being forced to it by a war, what he was obliged by these very rules to demand. He intended therefore nothing by this negotiation, if it may be called such, but to preserve forms and appearances; and perhaps, which many have suspected, to have time to prepare, as I hinted just now, both abroad and at home. Many things concurred to favour his preparations abroad. The alarm, that had been given by the acceptation of the will, was increased by every step that France made to secure the effect of it. Thus, for instance, the surprising and seizing the Dutch troops, in the same night, and at the same hour, that were dispersed in the garrisons of the Spanish Netherlands, was not excused by the necessity of securing those places to the obedience of Philip, nor softened by the immediate dismission of those troops. The impression it made was much the same as those of the surprises and seizures of France in former usurpations. No one knew then, that the sovereignty of the ten provinces was to be yielded up to the elector of Bavaria; and every one saw, that there remained no longer any barrier between France

and the Seven Provinces. At home, the disposition of the nation was absolutely turned to a war with France, on the death of king James the second, by the acknowledgment Lewis the fourteenth made of his son as king of England. I know what has been said in excuse for this measure, taken, as I believe, on female importunity; but certainly without any regard to publick faith, to the true interest of France in those circumstances, or to the true interest of the prince thus acknowledged in any. It was said, that the treaty of Ryswic obliging his most christian majesty only not to disturb king William in his possession, he might, without any violation of it, have acknowledged this prince as king of England; according to the political casuistry of the French, and the example of France, who finds no fault with the powers that treat with the kings of England, although the kings of England retain the title of kings of France; as well as the example of Spain, who makes no complaints that other states treat with the kings of France, although the kings of France retain the title of Navarre. But beside that the examples are not apposite, because no other powers acknowledge in form the king of England to be king of France, nor the king of France to be king of Navarre; with what face could the French excuse this measure? Could they excuse it by urging, that they adhered to the strict letter of one article of the treaty of Ryswic, against the plain meaning of that very article;

and against the whole tenour of that treaty; in the same breath with which they justified the acceptation of the will, by pretending they adhered to the supposed spirit and general intention of the treaties of partition, in contradiction to the letter, to the specifick engagements, and to the whole purport of those treaties? This part of the conduct of Lewis the fourteenth may appear justly the more surprising, because in most other parts of his conduct at the same time, and in some to his disadvantage, he acted cautiously, endeavoured to calm the minds of his neighbours, to reconcile Europe to his grandson's elevation, and to avoid all show of beginning hostilities.

Though king William was determined to engage in a war with France and Spain, yet the same good policy, that determined him to engage, determined him not to engage too deeply. The engagement taken in the grand alliance of one thousand seven hundred and one is, "To procure "an equitable and reasonable satisfaction to his "imperial majesty for his pretension to the "Spanish succession; and sufficient security to "the king of England, and the States-General, for "their dominions, and for the navigation and "commerce of their subjects, and to prevent "the union of the two monarchies of France and "Spain." As king of England, as stadtholder of Holland, he neither could, nor did engage any further. It may be disputed perhaps among speculative politicians, whether the balance of power in Europe would have been better preserved by

by that scheme of partition, which the treaties, and particularly the last of them, proposed, or by that which the grand alliance proposed to be the object of the war. I think there is little room for such a dispute, as I shall have occasion to say hereafter more expressly. In this place I shall only say, that the object of this war, which king William meditated, and queen Anne waged, was a partition, by which a prince of the house of Bourbon, already acknowledged by us and the Dutch as king of Spain, was to be left on the throne of that dismembered monarchy. The wisdom of those councils saw, that the peace of Europe might be restored and secured on this foot, and that the liberties of Europe would be in no danger.

The scales of the balance of power will never be exactly poised, nor is the precise point of equality either discernible or necessary to be discerned. It is sufficient in this, as in other human affairs, that the deviation be not too great. Some there will always be. A constant attention to these deviations is therefore necessary. When they are little, their increase may be easily prevented by early care, and the precautions that good policy suggests. But when they become great for want of this care and these precautions, or by the force of unforeseen events, more vigour is to be exerted, and greater efforts to be made. But even in such cases, much reflection is necessary on all the circumstances that form the conjuncture; lest, by attacking with ill success, the deviation

deviation be confirmed, and the power that is deemed already exorbitant become more so; and lest, by attacking with good success, while one scale is pillaged, too much weight of power be thrown into the other. In such cases, he who has considered, in the histories of former ages, the strange revolutions that time produces, and the perpetual flux and reflux of publick as well as private fortunes, of kingdoms and states as well as of those who govern or are governed in them, will incline to think, that if the scales can be brought back by a war, nearly, though not exactly, to the point they were at before this great deviation from it, the rest may be left to accidents, and to the use that good policy is able to make of them.

When Charles the fifth was at the heighth of his power, and in the zenith of his glory, when a king of France and a pope were at once his prisoners; it must be allowed, that, his situation and that of his neighbours compared, they had as much at least to fear from him and from the house of Austria, as the neighbours of Lewis the fourteenth had to fear from him and from the house of Bourbon, when, after all his other success, one of his grandchildren was placed on the Spanish throne. And yet among all the conditions of the several leagues against Charles the fifth, I do not remember that it was ever stipulated, that "no "peace ſhould be made with him as long as he "continued to be emperor and king of Spain; "nor as long as any Austrian prince continued "capable

" capable of uniting on his head the Imperial and " Spanish crowns."

If your lordship makes the application, you will find that the difference of some circumstances does not hinder this example from being very apposite and strong to the present purpose. Charles the fifth was emperor and king of Spain; but neither was Lewis the fourteenth king of Spain, nor Philip the fifth king of France. That had happened in one instance, which it was apprehended might happen in the other. It had happened, and it was reasonably to be apprehended that it might happen again, and that the Imperial and Spanish crowns might continue, not only in the same family, but on the same heads; for measures were taken to secure the succession of both to Philip the son of Charles. We do not find however that any confederacy was formed, any engagement taken, nor any war made, to remove or prevent this great evil. The princes and states of Europe contented themselves to oppose the designs of Charles the fifth, and to check the growth of his power occasionally, and as interest invited, or necessity forced them to do; not constantly. They did perhaps too little against him, and sometimes too much for him: but if they did too little of one kind, time and accident did the rest. Distinct dominions, and different pretensions, created contrary interests in the house of Austria: and on the abdication of Charles the fifth, his brother succeeded, not his son, to the empire. The House of Austria divided into a German

German and a Spanish branch: and if the two branches came to have a mutual influence on one another, and frequently a common interest, it was not till one of them had fallen from grandeur, and till the other was rather aiming at it, than in possession of it. In short, Philip was excluded from the imperial throne by so natural a progression of causes and effects, arising not only in Germany but in his own family, that if a treaty had been made to exclude him from it in favour of Ferdinand, such a treaty might have been said very probably to have executed itself.

The precaution I have mentioned, and that was neglected in this case without any detriment to the common cause of Europe, was not neglected in the grand alliance of one thousand seven hundred and one. For in that, one of the ends proposed by the war is, to obtain an effectual security against the contingent union of the crowns of France and Spain. The will of Charles the second provides against the same contingency: and this great principle, of preventing too much dominion and power from falling to the lot of either of the families of Bourbon or Austria, seemed to be agreed on all sides; since in the partition-treaty the same precaution was taken against a union of the Imperial and Spanish crowns. King William was enough piqued against France. His ancient prejudices were strong and well founded. He had been worsted in war, overreached in negotiation, and personally affronted by her. England and Holland were sufficiently alarmed and animated,

and

and a party was not wanting, even in our island, ready to approve any engagements he would have taken against France and Spain, and in favour of the house of Austria; though we were less concerned, by any national interest, than any other power that took part in the war, either then, or afterward. But this prince was far from taking a part beyond that which the particular interest of England and Holland, and the general interest of Europe, necessarily required. Pique must have no more a place than affection, in deliberations of this kind. To have engaged to dethrone Philip, out of resentment to Lewis the fourteenth, would have been a resolution worthy of Charles the twelfth, king of Sweden, who sacrificed his country, his people, and himself at last, to his revenge. To have engaged to conquer the Spanish monarchy for the house of Austria, or to go, in favour of that family, one step beyond those that were necessary to keep this house on a foot of rivalry with the other, would have been, as I have hinted, to act the part of a vassal, not of an ally. The former pawns his state and ruins his subjects, for the interest of his superiour lord, perhaps for his lord's humour, or his passion: the latter goes no further than his own interests carry him; nor makes war for those of another, nor even for his own, if they are remote and contingent, as if he fought pro aris et focis, for his religion, his liberty, and his property. Agreeably to these principles of good policy, we entered into the war that began on the death of Charles the second: but we soon

departed

departed from them, as I shall have occasion to observe in considering the state of things, at this remarkable conjuncture, in a view of strength.

Let me recal here what I have said somewhere else. They who are in the sinking scale of the balance of power do not easily, nor soon, come off from the habitual prejudices of superiority over their neighbours, nor from the confidence that such prejudices inspire. From the year one thousand six hundred and sixty-seven, to the end of that century, France had been constantly in arms, and her arms had been successful. She had sustained a war without any confederates, against the principal powers of Europe confederated against her, and had finished it with advantage on every side, just before the death of the king of Spain. She continued armed after the peace, by sea and land. She increased her forces, while other nations reduced theirs; and was ready to defend, or to invade her neighbours, while, their confederacy being dissolved, they were in no condition to invade her, and in a bad one to defend themselves. Spain and France had now one common cause. The electors of Bavaria and Cologne supported it in Germany: the duke of Savoy was an ally, the duke of Mantua a vassal of the two crowns in Italy. In a word, appearances were formidable on that side: and if a distrust of strength, on the side of the confederacy, had induced England and Holland to compound with France for a partition of the Spanish succession, there seemed to be still greater reason for this

this distrust after the acceptation of the will, the peaceable and ready submission of the entire monarchy of Spain to Philip, and all the measures taken to secure him in this possession. Such appearances might well impose. They did so on many, and on none more than on the French themselves, who engaged with great confidence and spirit in the war; when they found it, as they might well expect it would be, unavoidable. The strength of France however, though great, was not so great as the French thought it, nor equal to the efforts they undertook to make. Their engagement, to maintain the Spanish monarchy entire under the dominion of Philip, exceeded their strength. Our engagement, to procure some outskirts of it for the house of Austria, was not in the same disproportion to our strength. If I speak positively on this occasion, yet I cannot be accused of presumption; because, how disputable soever these points might be when they were points of political speculation, they are such no longer, and the judgment I make is dictated to me by experience. France threw herself into the sinking scale, when she accepted the will. Her scale continued to sink during the whole course of the war, and might have been kept by the peace as low as the true interest of Europe required. What I remember to have heard the duke of Marlborough say, before he went to take on him the command of the army in the Low Countries in one thousand seven hundred and two, proved true. The French misreckoned very much, if they

they made the same comparison between their troops and those of their enemies, as they had made in precedent wars. Those that had been opposed to them, in the last, were raw for the most part when it began, the British particularly: but they had been disciplined, if I may say so, by their defeats. They were grown to be veteran at the peace of Ryswic, and though many had been disbanded, yet they had been disbanded lately: so that even these were easily formed anew, and the spirit that had been raised continued in all. Supplies of men to recruit the armies were more abundant on the side of the confederacy, than on that of the two crowns: a necessary consequence of which it seemed to be, that those of the former would grow better, and those of the latter worse, in a long, extensive, and bloody war. I believe it proved so; and if my memory does not deceive me, the French were forced very early to send recruits to their armies, as they send slaves to their galleys. A comparison between those who were to direct the councils, and to conduct the armies on both sides, is a task it would become me little to undertake. The event showed, that if France had had her Condé, her Turenne, or her Luxemburg, to oppose to the confederates; the confederates might have opposed to her, with equal confidence, their Eugene of Savoy, their Marlborough, or their Starenberg. But there is one observation I cannot forbear to make. The alliances were concluded, the quotas were settled, and the season for taking

the field approached, when king William died. the event could not fail to occasion some consternation on one side, and to give some hopes on the other: for, notwithstanding the ill success with which he made war generally, he was looked upon as the sole centre of union that could keep together the great confederacy then forming: and how much the French feared from his life had appeared a few years before, in the extravagant and indecent joy they expressed on a false report of his death. A short time showed how vain the fears of some, and the hopes of others were. By his death, the duke of Marlborough was raised to the head of the army, and indeed of the confederacy: where he, a new, a private man, a subject, acquired by merit and by management a more deciding influence than high birth, confirmed authority, and even the crown of Great Britain had given to king William. Not only all the parts of that vast machine, the grand alliance, were kept more compact and entire; but a more rapid and vigorous motion was given to the whole: and, instead of languishing or disastrous campaigns, we saw every scene of the war full of action. All those wherein he appeared, and many of those wherein he was not then an actor, but abettor however of their action, were crowned with the most triumphant success. I take with pleasure this opportunity of doing justice to that great man, whose faults I knew, whose virtues I admired: and whose memory, as the greatest general and as the greatest minister that our country

country or perhaps any other has produced, I honour. But beside this, the observation I have made comes into my subject, since it serves to point out to your lordship the proof of what I said above, that France undertook too much, when she undertook to maintain the Spanish monarchy entire in the possession of Philip: and that we undertook no more than what was proportionable to our strength, when we undertook to weaken that monarchy by dismembering it, in the hands of a prince of the house of Bourbon, which we had been disabled by ill fortune and worse conduct to keep out of them. It may be said, that the great success of the confederates against France proves, that their generals were superiour to hers, but not that their forces and their national strength were so; that with the same force with which she was beaten, she might have been victorious; that if she had been so, or if the success of the war had varied, or been less decisive against her in Germany, in the Low Countries, and in Italy, as it was in Spain, her strength would have appeared sufficient, and that of the confederacy insufficient. Many things may be urged to destroy this reasoning: I content myself with one. France could not long have made even the unsuccessful efforts she did make, if England and Holland had done what it is undeniable they had strength to do; if beside pillaging, I do not say conquering the Spanish West Indies, they had hindered the French from going to the South Sea; as they did annually during

the whole course of the war without the least molestation, and from whence they imported into France in that time as much silver and gold as the whole species of that kingdom amounted to. With this immense and constant supply of wealth France was reduced in effect to bankruptcy before the end of the war. How much sooner must she have been so, if this supply had been kept from her? The confession of France herself is on my side. She confessed her inability to support what she had undertaken, when she sued for peace as early as the year one thousand seven hundred and six. She made her utmost efforts to answer the expectation of the Spaniards, and to keep their monarchy entire. When experience had made it evident, that this was beyond her power, she thought herself justified to the Spanish nation, in consenting to a partition, and was ready to conclude a peace with the allies on the principles of their grand alliance. But as France seemed to flatter herself, till experience made her desirous to abandon an enterprise that exceeded her strength; you will find, my lord, that her enemies began to flatter themselves in their turn, and to form designs and take engagements that exceeded theirs. Great Britain was drawn into these engagements little by little; for I do not remember any parliamentary declaration for continuing the war till Philip should be dethroned, before the year one thousand seven hundred and six: and then such a declaration was judged necessary to second the resolution of our ministers and our allies, in

departing

departing from the principle of the grand alliance, and in proposing not only the reduction of the French, but the conquest of the Spanish monarchy, as the objects of the war. This new plan had taken place, and we had begun to act upon it, two years before, when the treaty with Portugal was concluded, and the archduke Charles, now emperor, was sent into Portugal first, and into Catalonia afterward, and was acknowledged and supported as king of Spain.

When your lordship peruses the anecdotes of the times here spoken of, and considers the course and event of the great war which broke out on the death of the king of Spain, Charles the second, and was ended by the treaties of Utrecht and Radstat; you will find, that, in order to form a true judgment on the whole, you must consider very attentively the great change made by the new plan that I have mentioned; and compare it with the plan of the grand alliance, relatively to the general interest of Europe, and the particular interest of your own country. It will not, because it cannot, be denied, that all the ends of the grand alliance might have been obtained by a peace in one thousand seven hundred and six. I need not recal the events of that, and of the precedent years of the war. Not only the arms of France had been defeated on every side; but the inward state of that kingdom was already more exhausted than it had ever been. She went on indeed, but she staggered and reeled under the burden of the war. Our condition, I speak of

Great Britain, was not quite so bad: but the charge of the war increased annually upon us. It was evident, that this charge must continue to increase; and it was no less evident, that our nation was unable to bear it without falling soon into such distress, and contracting such debts, as we have seen and felt, and still feel. The Dutch neither restrained their trade, nor overloaded it with taxes. They soon altered the proportion of their quotas, and were deficient even after this alteration in them. But, however, it must be allowed, that they exerted their whole strength; and they and we paid the whole charge of the war. Since therefore by such efforts as could not be continued any longer, without oppressing and impoverishing these nations to a degree, that no interest except that of their very being, nor any engagement of assisting an alliance totis viribus can require, France was reduced, and all the ends of the war were become attainable; it will be worth your lordship's while to consider, why the true use was not made of the success of the confederates against France and Spain, and why a peace was not concluded in the fifth year of the war. When your lordship considers this, you will compare in your thoughts what the state of Europe would have been, and that of your own country might have been, if the plan of the grand alliance had been pursued; with the possible as well as certain, the contingent as well as necessary, consequences of changing this plan in the manner it was changed. You will be of opinion, I think,

think, and it seems to me, after more than twenty years of recollection, reexamination, and reflection, that impartial posterity must be of the same opinion; you will be of opinion, I think, that the war was wise and just before the change, because necessary to maintain that equality among the powers of Europe on which the publick peace and common prosperity depends: and that it was unwise and unjust after this change, because unnecessary to this end, and directed to other and to contrary ends. You will be guided by undeniable facts to discover, through all the false colours which have been laid, and which deceived many at the time, that the war, after this change, became a war of passion, of ambition, of avarice, and of private interest: the private interest of particular persons and particular states; to which the general interest of Europe was sacrificed so entirely, that if the terms insisted on by the confederates had been granted, nay if even those which France was reduced to grant, in one thousand seven hundred and ten, had been accepted, such a new system of power would have been created, as might have exposed the balance of this power to deviations, and the peace of Europe to troubles, not inferiour to those that the war was designed, when it began, to prevent. While you observe this in general, you will find particular occasion to lament the fate of Great Britain, in the midst of triumphs that have been sounded so high. She had triumphed indeed to the year one thousand seven hundred and six inclusively: but what were her triumphs afterward? What

was her success after she proceeded on the new plan? I shall say something on that head immediately. Here let me only say, that the glory of taking towns and winning battles is to be measured by the utility that results from those victories. Victories, that bring honour to the arms, may bring shame to the councils, of a nation. To win a battle, to take a town, is the glory of a general, and of an army. Of this glory we had a very large share in the course of the war. But the glory of a nation is to proportion the end she proposes to her interest and her strength: the means she employs, to the end she proposes, and the vigour she exerts, to both. Of this glory, I apprehend, we have had very little to boast at any time, and particularly in the great conjuncture of which I am speaking. The reasons of ambition, avarice, and private interest, which engaged the princes and states of the confederacy to depart from the principles of the grand alliance, were no reasons for Great Britain. She neither expected nor desired any thing more, than what she might have obtained by adhering to those principles. What hurried our nation then, with so much spirit and ardour, into those of the new plan? Your lordship will answer this question to yourself, I believe, by the prejudices and rashness of party; by the influence that the first successes of the confederate arms gave to our ministers; and the popularity that they gave, if I may say so, to the war; by ancient and fresh resentments, which the unjust and violent usurpations, in short the whole conduct of

Lewis

Lewis the fourteenth for forty years together, his haughty treatment of other princes and states, and even the style of his court had created; and, to mention no more, by a notion, groundless but prevalent, that he was and would be master as long as his grandson was king of Spain, and that there could be no effectual measure taken, though the grand alliance supposed that there might, to prevent a future union of the two monarchies, as long as a prince of the house of Bourbon sat on the Spanish throne. That such a notion should have prevailed, in the first confusion of thoughts which the death and will of Charles the second produced, among the generality of men who saw the fleets and armies of France take possession of all the parts of the Spanish monarchy, is not to be wondered at by those that consider how ill the generality of mankind are informed, how incapable they are of judging, and yet how ready to pronounce judgment: in fine, how inconsiderately they follow one another in any popular opinion, which the heads of party broach, or to which the first appearances of things have given occasion. But, even at this time the councils of England and Holland did not entertain this notion. They acted on quite another, as might be shown in many instances, if any other beside that of the grand alliance was necessary. When these councils therefore seemed to entertain this notion afterward, and acted and took engagements to act upon it, we must conclude that they had other motives. They could not have these; for they knew,

knew, that as the Spaniards had been driven by the two treaties of partition to give their monarchy to a prince of the house of Bourbon, so they were driven into the arms of France by the war, that we made to force a third upon them. If we acted rightly on the principles of the grand alliance, they acted rightly on those of the will: and if we could not avoid making an offensive war, at the expense of forming and maintaining a vast confederacy, they could not avoid purchasing the protection and assistance of France in a defensive war, and especially in the beginning of it, according to what I have somewhere observed already, by yielding to the authority and admitting the influence of that court in all the affairs of their government. Our ministers knew therefore, that if any inference was to be drawn from the first part of this notion, it was for shortening, not prolonging, the war; for delivering the Spaniards as soon as possible from habits of union and intimacy with France; not for continuing them under the same necessity, till by length of time these habits should be confirmed. As to the latter part of this notion, they knew that it was false and silly. Garth, the best natured ingenious wild man I ever knew, might be in the right, when he said, in some of his poems at that time,

"——— An Austrian prince alone
"Is fit to nod upon a Spanish throne."

The setting an Austrian prince upon it was, no doubt, the surest expedient to prevent a union of

of the two monarchies of France and Spain; just as setting a prince of the house of Bourbon on that throne was the surest expedient to prevent a union of the Imperial and Spanish crowns. But it was equally false to say, in either case, that this was the sole expedient. It would be no paradox, but a proposition easily proved, to advance, that if these unions had been effectually provided against, the general interest of Europe would have been little concerned whether Philip or Charles had nodded at Madrid. It would be likewise no paradox to say, that the contingency of uniting France and Spain under the same prince appeared more remote, about the middle of the last great war, when the dethronement of Philip in favour of Charles was made a condition of peace sine qua non, than the contingency of a union of the Imperial and Spanish crowns. Nay, I know not whether it would be a paradox to affirm, that the expedient that was taken, and that was always obvious to be taken, of excluding Philip and his race from the succession of France, by creating an interest in all the other princes of the blood, and by consequence a party in France itself, for their exclusion, whenever the case should happen, was not in it's nature more effectual than any that could have been taken: and some must have been taken, not only to exclude Charles from the empire whenever the case should happen that happened soon, the death of his brother Joseph without issue male, but his posterity likewise in all future vacancies of the imperial throne. The expedient

pedient that was taken against Philip at the treaty of Utrecht, they who opposed the peace attempted to ridicule; but some of them have had occasion since that time to see, though the case has not happened, how effectual it would have been if it had: and he, who should go about to ridicule it after our experience, would only make himself ridiculous. Notwithstanding all this, he who transports himself back to that time must acknowledge, that the confederated powers in general could not but be of Garth's mind, and think it more agreeable to the common interest of Europe, that a branch of Austria, than a branch of Bourbon, should gather the Spanish succession; and that the maritime powers, as they are called impertinently enough with respect to the superiority of Great Britain, might think it was for their particular interest to have a prince, dependant for some time at least on them, king of Spain, rather than a prince whose dependance, as long as he stood in any, must be naturally on France. I do not say, as some have done, a prince whose family was an old ally, rather than a prince whose family was an old enemy; because I lay no weight on the gratitude of princes, and am as much persuaded, that an Austrian king of Spain would have made us returns of that sort in no other proportion than of his want of us, as I am that Philip and his race will make no other returns of the same sort to France. If this affair had been entire, therefore, on the death of the king of Spain; if we had made no partition, nor he any will, the whole

monarchy

monarchy of Spain would have been the prize to be fought for: and our wishes, and such efforts as we were able to make, in the most unprovided condition imaginable, must have been on the side of Austria. But it was far from being entire. A prince of the house of Austria might have been on the spot, before the king of Spain died, to gather his succession; but instead of this, a prince of the house of Bourbon was there soon afterward, and took possession of the whole monarchy, to which he had been called by the late king's will, and by the voice of the Spanish nation. The councils of England and Holland therefore preferred very wisely, by their engagements in the grand alliance, what was more practicable though less eligible, to what they deemed more eligible, but saw become by the course of events, if not absolutely impracticable, yet an enterprise of more length, more difficulty, and greater expense of blood and treasure, than these nations were able to bear; or than they ought to bear, when their security and that of the rest of Europe might be sufficiently provided for at a cheaper rate. If the confederates could not obtain, by the force of their arms, the ends of the war laid down in the grand alliance, to what purpose would it be to stipulate for more? And if they were able to obtain these, it was evident that, while they dismembered the Spanish monarchy, they must reduce the power of France. This happened; the Low Countries were conquered; the French were driven out of Germany and Italy:

Italy: and Lewis the fourteenth, who had so long and so lately set mankind at defiance, was reduced to sue for peace.

If it had been granted him in one thousand seven hundred and six, on what foot must it have been granted? The allies had already in their power all the states, that were to compose the reasonable satisfaction for the emperor. I say, in their power; because though Naples and Sicily were not actually reduced at that time, yet the expulsion of the French out of Italy, and the disposition of the people of these kingdoms, considered, it was plain the allies might reduce them when they pleased. The confederate arms were superiour till then in Spain, and several provinces acknowledged Charles the third. If the rest had been yielded to him by treaty, all that the new plan required had been obtained. If the French would not yet have abandoned Philip, as we had found that the Castilians would not even when our army was at Madrid, all that the old plan, the plan of the grand alliance required, had been obtained; but still France and Spain had given nothing to purchase a peace, and they were in circumstances not to expect it without purchasing it. They would have purchased it my lord: and France, as well as Spain, would have contributed a larger share of the price, rather than continue the war, in her exhausted state. Such a treaty of peace would have been a third treaty of partition indeed, but vastly preferable to the two former. The great objection to the former was drawn

drawn from that considerable increase of dominion, which the crown of France, and not a branch of the house of Bourbon, acquired by them. I know what may be said speciously enough to persuade, that such an increase of dominion would not have augmented, but would rather have weakened the power of France, and what examples may be drawn from history to countenance such an opinion. I know likewise, that the compact figure of France, and the contiguity of all her provinces, make a very essential part of the force of her monarchy. Had the designs of Charles the eighth, Lewis the twelfth, Francis the first, and Henry the second, succeeded, the dominions of France would have been more extensive, and I believe the strength of her monarchy would have been less. I have sometimes thought, that even the loss of the battle of St. Quentin, which obliged Henry the second to recal the duke of Guise with his army out of Italy, was in this respect no unhappy event. But the reasoning which is good, I think, when applied to those times, will not hold when applied to ours, and to the case I consider here; the state of France, the state of her neighbours, and the whole constitution of Europe being so extremely different. The objection therefore to the two treaties of partition had a real weight. The power of France, deemed already exorbitant, would have been increased by this accession of dominion in the hands of Lewis the fourteenth: and the use he intended to make of it, by keeping Italy and Spain in awe, appears in the

the article that gave him the ports on the Tuscan coast, and the province of Guipuscoa. This king William might, and, I question not, did see; but that prince might think too, that for this very reason Lewis the fourteenth would adhere, in all events, to the treaty of partition: and that these consequences were more remote, and would be less dangerous, than those of making no partition at all. The partition, even the worst that might have been made, by a treaty of peace in one thousand seven hundred and six, would have been the very reverse of this. France would have been weakened, and her enemies strengthened, by her concessions on the side of the Low Countries, of Germany and Savoy. If a prince of her royal family had remained in possession of Spain and the West Indies, no advantage would have accrued to her by it, and effectual bars would have been opposed to a union of the two monarchies. The house of Austria would have had a reasonable satisfaction for that shadow of right, which a former partition gave her. She had no other after the will of Charles the second; and this may be justly termed a shadow, since England, Holland, and France could confer no real right to the Spanish succession, nor to any part of it. She had declined acceding to that partition, before France departed from it, and would have preferred the Italian provinces, without Spain and the West-Indies, to Spain and the West Indies, without the Italian provinces. The Italian provinces would have fallen to her share by this partition. The

particular

particular demands of England and Holland would have suffered no difficulty, and those that we were obliged by treaty to make for others would have been easy to adjust. Would not this have been enough, my lord, for the publick security, for the common interest, and for the glory of our arms? To have humbled and reduced in five campaigns a power, that had disturbed and insulted Europe almost forty years; to have restored, in so short a time, the balance of power in Europe to a sufficient point of equality, after it had been more than fifty years, that is from the treaty of Westphalia, in a gradual deviation from this point; in short, to have retrieved, in one thousand seven hundred and six, a game that was become desperate at the beginning of the century. To have done all this, before the war had exhausted our strength, was the utmost sure that any man could desire, who intended the publick good alone: and no honest reason ever was, nor ever will be given, why the war was protracted any longer; why we neither made peace after a short, vigorous, and successful war, nor put it entirely out of the power of France to continue at any rate a long one. I have said, and it is true, that it had been entirely out of her power, if we had given greater interruption to the commerce of Old and New Spain, and if we had hindered France from importing annually, from the year one thousand seven hundred and two, such immense treasures as she did import by the ships she sent, with the permission of Spain, to the South Sea. It has been advanced, and it is a

common opinion, that we were restrained by the jealousy of the Dutch, from making use of the liberty given by treaty to them and us, and which, without his imperial majesty's leave, since we entered into the war, we might have taken, of making conquests in the Spanish West Indies. Be it so But to go to the South Seas, to trade there if we could, to pillage the West Indies without making conquests, if we could not, and, whether we traded or whether we pillaged, to hinder the French from trading there; was a measure that would have given, one ought to think, no jealousy to the Dutch, who might, and it is to be supposed would, have taken their part in these expeditions; or if it had given them jealousy, what could they have replied, when a British minister had told them: "That it little became them to find fault that we "traded with or pillaged the Spaniards in the "West Indies to the detriment of our common "enemy, while we connived at them who traded "with this enemy to his and their great advan-"tage, against our remonstrances, and in viola-"tion of the condition upon which we had given "the first augmentation of our forces in the Low "Countries?" We might have pursued this measure notwithstanding any engagement that we took by the treaty with Portugal, if I remember that treaty right: but instead of this, we wasted our forces, and squandered millions after millions in supporting our alliance with this crown, and in pursuing the chimerical project which was made the object of this alliance. I call it chimerical because it was equally so, to expect a revolution

in favour of Charles the third on the slender authority of such a trifler as the admiral of Castile; and, when this failed us, to hope to conquer Spain by the assistance of the Portuguese, and the revolt of the Catalans. Yet this was the foundation upon which the new plan of the war was to be built, and so many ruinous engagements were taken.

The particular motives of private men, as well as of princes and states, to protract the war, are partly known, and partly guessed, at this time. But whenever that time comes, and I am persuaded it will come, when their secret motives, their secret designs, and intrigues can be laid open, I presume to say to your lordship, that the most confused scene of iniquity, and folly, that it is possible to imagine, will appear. In the mean while, if your lordship considers only the treaty of barrier, as my lord Townshend signed it, without, nay in truth, against orders, for the duke of Marlborough, though joint plenipotentiary, did not: if you consider the famous preliminaries of one thousand seven hundred and nine, which we made a mock show of ratifying, though we knew that they would not be accepted; for so the marquis of Torcy had told the pensionary before he left the Hague, as the said marquis has assured me very often since that time: if you inquire into the anecdotes of Gertruydenberg, and if you consult other authentick papers that are extant, your lordship will see the policy of the new plan, I think, in this light. Though we had refused, before the

war began, to enter into engagements for the conquest of Spain, yet as soon as it began, when the reason of things was still the same, for the success of our first campaign cannot be said to have altered it, we entered into these very engagements. By the treaty wherein we took these engagements first, Portugal was brought into the grand alliance; that is, she consented to employ her formidable forces against Philip, at the expense of England and Holland, provided we would debar ourselves from making any acquisitions, and the house of Austria promise, that she should acquire many important places in Spain, and an immense extent of country in America. By such bargains as this, the whole confederacy was formed, and held together. Such means were indeed effectual to multiply enemies to France and Spain; but a project so extensive and so difficult as to make many bargains of this kind necessary, and necessary for a great number of years, and for a very uncertain event, was a project into which, for this very reason, England and Holland should not have entered. It is worthy your observation, my lord, that these bad bargains would not have been continued, as they were almost to our immediate ruin, if the war had not been protracted under the pretended necessity of reducing the whole Spanish monarchy to the obedience of the house of Austria. Now, as no other confederate except Portugal was to receive his recompense by any dismemberment of dominions in Old or New Spain, the engage-

ments we took to conquer this whole monarchy had no visible necessary cause, but the procuring the accession of this power, that was already neuter, to the grand alliance. This accession, as I have said before, served only to make us neglect immediate and certain advantages for remote and uncertain hopes; and choose to attempt the conquest of the Spanish nation at our own vast expense, whom we might have starved, and by starving reduced both the French and them, at their expense.

I called the necessity of reducing the whole Spanish monarchy to the obedience of the house of Austria a pretended necessity: and pretended it was, not real, without doubt. But I am apt to think your lordship may go further, and find some reasons to suspect, that the opinion itself of this necessity was not very real, in the minds of those who urged it: in the minds I would say of the able men among them; for that it was real in some of our zealous British politicians, I do them the justice to believe. Your lordship may find reasons to suspect perhaps, that this opinion was set up rather to occasion a diversion of the forces of France, and to furnish pretences for prolonging the war for other ends.

Before the year one thousand seven hundred and ten, the war was kept alive with alternate success in Spain; and it may be said therefore, that the design of conquering this kingdom continued, as well as the hopes of succeeding. But why then did the States General refuse, in one

thousand seven hundred and nine, to admit an article in the barrier treaty, by which they would have obliged themselves to procure the whole Spanish monarchy to the house of Austria, when that zealous politician my lord Townshend pressed them to it? If their opinion of the necessity of carrying on the war till this point could be obtained was real, why did they risk the immense advantages given them with so much profuse generosity by this treaty, rather than consent to an engagement that was so conformable to their opinion?

After the year one thousand seven hundred and ten, it will not be said, I presume, that the war could be supported in Spain with any prospect of advantage on our side. We had sufficiently experienced how little dependance could be had on the vigour of the Portuguese; and how firmly the Spanish nation in general, the Castilians in particular, were attached to Philip. Our armies had been twice at Madrid, this prince had been twice driven from his capital, his rival had been there, none stirred in favour of the victorious, all wished and acted for the vanquished. In short, the falsehood of all those lures, by which we had been enticed to make war in Spain, had appeared sufficiently in one thousand seven hundred and six; but was so grossly evident in one thousand seven hundred and ten, that Mr. Craggs, who was sent towards the end of that year by Mr. Stanhope into England, on commissions which he executed with much good sense and much address, owned to me, that

that in Mr. Stanhope's opinion, and he was not apt to despond of success, especially in the execution of his own projects, nothing could be done more in Spain, the general attachment of the people to Philip, and their aversion to Charles considered: that armies of twenty or thirty thousand men might walk about that country till doomsday, so he expressed himself, without effect: that wherever they came, the people would submit to Charles the third out of terrour, and as soon as they were gone, proclaim Philip the fifth again out of affection: that to conquer Spain required a great army: and to keep it, a greater.

Was it possible, after this, to think in good earnest of conquering Spain? and could they be in good earnest, who continued to hold the same language, and to insist on the same measures? Could they be so in the following year, when the emperor Joseph died? Charles was become then the sole surviving male of the house of Austria, and succeeded to the empire as well as to all the hereditary dominions of that family. Could they be in earnest who maintained, even in this conjuncture, that "no peace could be safe, honourable, or lasting, so long as the kingdom of Spain "and the West Indies remained in the possession of "any branch of the house of Bourbon?" Did they mean that Charles should be emperor and king of Spain? In this project they would have had the allies against them. Did they mean to call the duke of Savoy to the crown of Spain, or to bestow it on some other prince? In this pro-

ject they would have had his imperial majesty against them. In either case the confederacy would have been broken: and how then would they have continued the war? Did they mean nothing, or did they mean something more than they owned, something more than to reduce the exorbitant power of France, and to force the whole Spanish monarchy out of the house of Bourbon?

Both these ends might have been obtained at Gertruydenberg. Why were they not obtained? Read the preliminaries of one thousand seven hundred and nine, which were made the foundation of this treaty. Inform yourself of what passed there, and observe what followed. Your lordship will remain astonished. I remain so every time I reflect upon them, though I saw these things at no very great distance, even while they were in transaction; and though I know most certainly, that France lost, two years before, by the little skill and address of her principal minister*, in answering overtures made during the siege of Lisle by a principal person among the allies, such an opportunity, and such a correspondence, as would have removed some of the obstacles that lay now in her way, have prevented others, and have procured her peace. An equivalent for the thirty-seventh article of the preliminaries, that is, for the cession of Spain and the West Indies, was the point to be discussed at Gertruydenberg. Naples and Sicily, or even Naples and Sardinia

* Chamillard.

would

would have contented the French, at least they would have accepted them as the equivalent. Buys and Vanderdussen, who treated with them, reported this to the ministers of the allies: and it was upon this occasion that the duke of Marlborough, as Buys himself told me, took immediately the lead, and congratulated the assembly on the near approach of a peace; said, that since the French were in this disposition, it was time to consider what further demands should be made upon them, according to the liberty reserved in the preliminaries; and exhorted all the ministers of the allies to adjust their several ulterior pretensions, and to prepare their demands.

This proceeding, and what followed, put me in mind of that of the Romans with the Carthaginians. The former were resolved to consent to no peace, till Carthage was laid in ruins. They set a treaty however on foot, at the request of their old enemy, imposed some terms, and referred them to their generals for the rest. Their generals pursued the same method, and, by reserving still a right of making ulterior demands, they reduced the Carthaginians at last to the necessity of abandoning their city, or of continuing the war after they had given up their arms, their machines, and their fleet, in hopes of peace.

France saw the snare, and resolved to run any risk rather than to be caught in it. We continued to demand, under pretence of securing the cession of Spain and the West Indies, that Lewis the fourteenth should take on him

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to dethrone his grandson in the space of two months; and if he did not effect it in that time, that we should be at liberty to renew the war, without restoring the places that were to be put into our hands according to the preliminaries; which were the most important places France possessed on the side of the Low-Countries. Lewis offered to abandon his grandson; and, if he could not prevail on him to resign, to furnish money to the allies, who might at the expense of France force him to evacuate Spain. The proposition made by the allies had an air of inhumanity: and the rest of mankind might be shocked, to see the grandfather obliged to make war on his grandson. But Lewis the fourteenth had treated mankind with too much inhumanity in his prosperous days, to have any reason to complain even of this proposition. His people indeed, who are apt to have great partiality for their kings, might pity his distress. This happened, and he found his account in it. Philip must have evacuated Spain, I think, notwithstanding his own obstinacy, the spirit of his queen, and the resolute attachment of the Spaniards, if his grandfather had insisted, and been in earnest to force him. But if this expedient was, as it was, odious, why did we prefer to continue the war against France and Spain, rather than accept the other? Why did we neglect the opportunity of reducing, effectually and immediately, the exorbitant power of France, and of rendering the conquest of Spain practicable? both which might have been brought about, and

and consequently the avowed ends of the war might have been answered, by accepting the expedient that France offered. "France," it was said, "was not sincere: she meant nothing more than "to amuse, and divide." This reason was given at the time: but some of those, who gave it then, I have seen ashamed to insist on it since. France was not in a condition to act the part she had acted in former treaties: and her distress was no bad pledge of her sincerity on this occasion. But there was a better still. The strong places that she must have put into the hands of the allies would have exposed her on the least breach of faith, to see, not her frontier alone, but even the provinces that lie behind it, desolated: and prince Eugene might have had the satisfaction, it is said, I know not how truly, he desired, of marching with the torch in his hand to Versailles.

Your lordship will observe, that, the conferences at Gertruydenberg ending in the manner they did, the inflexibility of the allies gave new life and spirit to the French and Spanish nations, distressed and exhausted as they were. The troops of the former withdrawn out of Spain, and the Spaniards left to defend themselves as they could, the Spaniards alone obliged us to retreat from Madrid, and defeated us in our retreat. But your lordship may think perhaps, as I do, that if Lewis the fourteenth had bound himself by a solemn treaty to abandon his grandson, had paid a subsidy to dethrone him, and had consented to acknowledge another king of Spain, the Spaniards would

would not have exerted the same zeal for Philip; the actions of Almenara and Saragoſſa might have been decisive, and those of Brihuega and Villa Viciosa would not have happened. After all these events, how could any reasonable man expect, that a war should be supported with advantage in Spain, to which the court of Vienna had contributed nothing from the first, scarce bread to their archduke; which Portugal waged faintly and with deficient quotas; and which the Dutch had in a manner renounced, by neglecting to recruit their forces? How was Charles to be placed on the Spanish throne, or Philip at least to be driven out of it? By the success of the confederate arms in other parts. But what success, sufficient to this purpose, could we expect? This question may be answered best, by showing what success we had.

Portugal and Savoy did nothing before the death of the emperor Joseph; and declared in form, as soon as he was dead, that they would carry on the war no longer to set the crown of Spain on the head of Charles, since this would be to fight against the very principle they had fought for. The Rhine was a scene of inaction. The sole efforts, that were to bring about the great event of dethroning Philip, were those which the Duke of Marlborough was able to make. He took three towns in one thousand seven hundred and ten, Aire, Bethune, and St. Venant: and one, Bouchain, in one thousand seven hundred and eleven. Now this conquest being

being in fact the only one the confederates made that year, Bouchain may be said properly and truly to have cost our nation very near seven millions sterling: for your lordship will find, I believe, that the charge of the war for that year amounted to no less. It is true, that the duke of Marlborough had proposed a very great project, by which incursions would have been made during the winter into France; the next campaign might have been opened early on our side; and several other great and obvious advantages might have been obtained: but the Dutch refused to contribute even less than their proportion, for the queen had offered to take the deficiency on herself, to the expense of barracks and forage; and disappointed by their obstinacy the whole design.

We were then amused with visionary schemes of marching our whole army, in a year or two more, and after a town or two more were taken, directly to Paris, or at least in the heart of France. But was this so easy or so sure a game? The French expected we would play it. Their generals had visited the several posts they might take, when our army should enter France, to retard, to incommode, to distress us in our march, and even to make a decisive stand and to give us battle. I take what I say here from indisputable authority, that of the persons consulted and employed in preparing for this great distress. Had we been beaten, or had we been forced to retire towards our own frontier in the Low Countries, after penetrating

ing the war in order to dethrone Philip, from the year one thousand seven hundred and eleven inclusively, could be no other than these: our design of penetrating into France might have been defeated, and have become fatal to us by a reverse of fortune: our first success might not have obliged the French to submit: and we might have had France to conquer, after we had failed in our first attempt to conquer Spain, and even in order to proceed to a second: the French might have submitted, and the Spaniards not: and while the former had been employed to force the latter, according to the scheme of the allies; or while, the latter submitting likewise, Philip had evacuated Spain, the high allies might have gone together by the ears about dividing the spoil, and disposing of the crown of Spain. To these issues were things brought by protracting the war; by refusing to make peace, on the principles of the grand alliance at worst, in one thousand seven hundred and six; and by refusing to grant it, even on those of the new plan, in one thousand seven hundred and ten. Such contingent events as I have mentioned stood in prospect before us. The end of the war was removed out of sight; and they, who clamoured rather than argued for the continuation of it, contented themselves to affirm, that France was not enough reduced, and that no peace ought to be made as long as a prince of the house of Bourbon remained on a Spanish throne. When they would think France enough reduced, it was impossible to guess. Whether they intended

tended to join the Imperial and Spanish crowns on the head of Charles, who had declared his irrevocable resolution to continue the war till the conditions insisted upon at Gertruydenberg were obtained: whether they intended to bestow Spain and the Indies on some other prince; and how this great alteration in their own plan should be effected by common consent: how possession should be given to Charles, or any other prince, not only of Spain but of all the Spanish dominions out of Europe, where the attachment to Philip was at least as strong as in Castile, and where it would not be so easy, the distance and extent of these dominions considered, to oblige the Spaniards to submit to another government: These points, and many more equally necessary to be determined, and equally difficult to prepare, were neither determined nor prepared: so that we were reduced to carry on the war, after the death of the emperor Joseph, without any positive scheme agreed to, as the scheme of the future peace, by the allies. That of the grand alliance we had long before renounced. That of the new plan was become ineligible; and if it had been eligible it would have been impracticable, because of the division it would have created among the allies themselves: several of whom would not have consented, notwithstanding his irrevocable resolution, that the emperor should be king of Spain. I know not what part the protractors of the war, in the depth of their policy, intended to take. Our nation had contributed, and acted so long under the direction of their councils,

for the grandeur of the house of Austria, like one of the hereditary kingdoms usurped by that family, that it is lawful to think their intention might be to unite the Imperial and Spanish crowns. But I rather think they had no very determinate view, beyond that of continuing the war as long as they could. The late lord Oxford told me, that my lord Somers being pressed, I know not on what occasion nor by whom, on the unnecessary and ruinous continuation of the war; instead of giving reasons to show the necessity of it, contented himself to reply, that he had been bred up in a hatred of France. This was a strange reply for a wise man; and yet I know not whether he could have given a better then, or whether any of his pupils could give a better now.

The whig party in general acquired great and just popularity, in the reign of our Charles the second, by the clamour they raised against the conduct of that prince in foreign affairs. They who succeeded to the name rather than the principles of this party, after the revolution, and who have had the administration of the government in their hands with very little interruption ever since, pretending to act on the same principle, have run into an extreme as vicious and as contrary to all the rules of good policy, as that which their predecessors exclaimed against. The old whigs complained of the inglorious figure we made, while our court was the bubble, and our king the pensioner of France; and insisted that the growing ambition and power of Lewis the fourteenth should

should be opposed in time. The modern whigs boasted, and still boast, of the glorious figure we made, while we reduced ourselves, by their councils, and under their administrations, to be the bubbles of our pensioners, that is, of our allies; and while we measured our efforts in war, and the continuation of them, without any regard to the interests and abilities of our own country, without a just and sober regard, such a one as contemplates objects in their true light, and sees them in their true magnitude, to the general system of power in Europe; and, in short, with a principal regard merely to particular interests at home and abroad. I say at home and abroad; because it is not less true, that they have sacrificed the wealth of their country to the forming and maintaining a party at home, than that they have done so to the forming and maintaining, beyond all pretences of necessity, alliances abroad. These general assertions may be easily justified without having recourse to private anecdotes, as your Lordship will find, when you consider the whole series of our conduct in the two wars; in that which preceded, and that which succeeded immediately the beginning of the present century, but above all in the last of them. In the administrations that preceded the revolution, trade had flourished, and our nation had grown opulent: but the general interest of Europe had been too much neglected by us; and slavery, under the umbrage of prerogative, had been well-nigh established among us. In those that have followed,

taxes upon taxes, and debts upon debts, have been perpetually accumulated, till a small number of families have grown into immense wealth, and national beggary has been brought upon us; under the specious pretences of supporting a common cause against France, reducing her exorbitant power, and poising that of Europe more equally in the publick balance: laudable designs no doubt as far as they were real, but such as, being converted into mere pretences, have been productive of much evil; some of which we feel and have long felt, and some will extend it's consequences to our latest posterity. The reign of prerogative was short: and the evils and the dangers, to which we were exposed by it, ended with it. But the reign of false and squandering policy has lasted long, it lasts still, and will finally complete our ruin. Beggary has been the consequence of slavery in some countries: slavery will be probably the consequence of beggary in ours; and if it is so, we know at whose door to lay it. If we had finished the war in one thousand seven hundred and six, we should have reconciled, like a wise people, our foreign and our domestick interests as nearly as possible: we should have secured the former sufficiently, and not have sacrificed the latter as entirely as we did by the prosecution of the war afterward. You will not be able to see without astonishment, how the charge of the war increased yearly upon us from the beginning of it; nor how immense a sum we paid in the course of it to supply the deficiences of our confederates.

federates. Your astonishment and indignation too will increase, when you come to compare the progress, that was made from the year one thousand seven hundred and six exclusively, with the expense of more than thirty millions, I do not exaggerate though I write upon memory, that this progress cost us to the year one thousand seven hundred and eleven inclusively. Upon this view your lordship will be persuaded, that it was high time to take the resolution of making peace, when the queen thought fit to change her ministry toward the end of the year one thousand seven hundred and ten. It was high time indeed to save our country from absolute insolvency and bankruptcy, by putting an end to a scheme of conduct, which the prejudices of a party, the whimsy of some particular men, the private interest of more, and the ambition and avarice of our allies, who had been invited as it were to a scramble by the preliminaries of one thousand seven hundred and nine alone maintained. The persons therefore, who came into power at this time, hearkened, and they did well to hearken, to the first overtures that were made them. The disposition of their enemies invited them to do so, but that of their friends, and that of a party at home who had nursed, and been nursed by the war, might have deterred them from it; for the difficulties and dangers, to which they must be exposed in carrying forward this great work, could escape none of them. In a letter to a friend it may be allowed me to say, that they did not escape me: and that I foresaw

as contingent but not improbable events, a good part of what has happened to me since. Though it was a duty therefore that we owed to our country, to deliver her from the necessity of bearing any longer so unequal a part in so unnecessary a war, yet was there some degree of merit in performing it. I think so strongly in this manner, I am so incorrigible, my lord, that if I could be placed in the same circumstances again, I would take the same resolution, and act the same part. Age and experience might enable me to act with more ability, and greater skill: but all I have suffered since the death of the queen should not hinder me from acting. Notwithstanding this, I shall not be surprised if you think, that the peace of Utrecht was not answerable to the success of the war, nor to the efforts made in it. I think so myself, and have always owned, even when it was making and made, that I thought so. Since we had committed a successful folly, we ought to have reaped more advantage from it than we did: and whether we had left Philip, or placed another prince on the throne of Spain, we ought to have reduced the power of France, and to have strengthened her neighbours, much more than we did. We ought to have reduced her power for generations to come, and not to have contented ourselves with a momentary reduction of it. France was exhausted to a great degree of men and money, and her government had no credit: but they, who took this for a sufficient reduction of her power, looked but a little way before them, and reasoned too

superficially. Several such there were however; for as it has been said, that there is no extravagancy which some philosopher or other has not maintained, so your experience, young as you are, must have shown you, that there is no absurd extreme, into which our party politicians of Great Britain are not prone to fall, concerning the state and conduct of publick affairs. But if France was exhausted; so were we, and so were the Dutch. Famine rendered her condition much more miserable than ours, at one time, in appearance and in reality too. But as soon as this accident, that had distressed the French and frightened Lewis the fourteenth to the utmost degree, and the immediate consequences of it were over; it was obvious to observe, though few made the observation, that while we were unable to raise in a year, by some millions at least, the expenses of the year, the French were willing and able to bear the imposition of the tenth, over and above all the other taxes that had been laid upon them. This observation had the weight it deserved; and surely it deserved to have some among those who made it, at the time spoken of, and who did not think that the war was to be continued as long as a parliament could be prevailed on to vote money. But supposing it to have deserved none, supposing the power of France to have been reduced as low as you please with respect to her inward state, yet still I affirm, that such a reduction could not be permanent, and was not therefore sufficient. Whoever knows the nature of her government,

the temper of her people, and the natural advantages she has in commerce over all the nations that surround her, knows that an arbitrary government, and the temper of her people enable her on particular occasions to throw off a load of debt much more easily, and with consequences much less to be feared, than any of her neighbours can: that although in the general course of things trade be cramped and industry vexed by this arbitrary government, yet neither one nor the other is oppressed; and the temper of the people, and the natural advantages of the country, are such, that how great soever her distress be at any point of time, twenty years of tranquillity suffice to re-establish her affairs, and to enrich her again at the expense of all the nations of Europe. If any one doubts of this, let him consider the condition in which this kingdom was left by Lewis the fourteenth: the strange pranks the duke of Orleans played, during his regency and administration, with the whole system of publick revenue, and private property: and then let him tell himself that the revenues of France, the tenth taken off, exceed all the expenses of her government by many millions of livres already, and will exceed them by many more in another year.

Upon the whole matter, my lord, the low and exhausted state, to which France was reduced by the last great war, was but a momentary reduction of her power; and whatever real and more lasting reduction the treaty of Utretcht brought about in some instances, it was not sufficient.

The power of France would not have appeared as great as it did, when England and Holland armed themselves and armed all Germany against her, if she had lain as open to the invasions of her enemies, as her enemies lay to hers. Her inward strength was great; but the strength of those frontiers, which Lewis the fourteenth was almost forty years in forming, and which the folly of all his neighbours in their turns suffered him to form, made this strength as formidable as it became. The true reduction of the exorbitant power of France, I take no notice of chimerical projects about changing her government, consisted therefore in disarming her frontiers, and fortifying the barriers against her, by the cession and demolition of many more places than she yielded up at Utrecht; but not of more than she might have been obliged to sacrifice to her own immediate relief, and to the future security of her neighbours. That she was not obliged to make these sacrifices, I affirm, was owing solely to those who opposed the peace: and I am willing to put my whole credit with your lordship, and the whole merits of a cause that has been so much contested, on this issue. I say a cause that has been so much contested; for in truth, I think, it is no longer a doubt any where, except in British pamphlets, whether the conduct of those who neither declined treating, as was done in one thousand seven hundred and six; nor pretended to treat without a design of concluding, as was done in one thousand seven hundred and nine and ten, but

but carried the great work of the peace forward to it's consummation; or the conduct of those who opposed this work in every step of it's progress, saved the power of France from a greater and a sufficient reduction at the treaty of Utrecht. The very ministers, who were employed in this fatal opposition, are obliged to confess this truth. How should they deny it? Those of Vienna may complain, that the emperor had not the entire Spanish monarchy; or those of Holland that the States were not made masters directly and indirectly of the whole Low Countries. But neither they nor any one else, that has any sense of shame about him, can deny that the late queen, though she was resolved to treat because she was resolved to finish the war, yet was to the utmost degree desirous to treat in a perfect union with her allies, and to procure them all the reasonable terms they could expect; and much better than those they reduced themselves to the necessity of accepting, by endeavouring to wrest the negotiation out of her hands. The disunion of the allies gave France the advantages she improved. The sole question is, Who caused this disunion? and that will be easily decided by every impartial man, who informs himself carefully of the publick anecdotes of that time. If the private anecdotes were to be laid open as well as those, and I think it almost time they should, the whole monstrous scene would appear, and shock the eye of every honest man. I do not intend to descend into many particulars at this time: but whenever I, or any other person as well informed

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as I, shall descend into a full deduction of such particulars, it will become undeniably evident, that the most violent opposition imaginable, carried on by the Germans and the Dutch in league with a party in Britain, began as soon as the first overtures were made to the queen; before she had so much as begun to treat: and was therefore an opposition not to this or that plan of treaty, but in truth to all treaty; and especially to one wherein Great Britain took the lead, or was to have any particular advantage. That the Imperialists meant no treaty, unless a preliminary and impracticable condition of it was to set the crown of Spain on the emperor's head, will appear from this; that prince Eugene, when he came into England, long after the death of Joseph and elevation of Charles, upon an errand most unworthy of so great a man, treated always on this supposition: and I remember with how much inward impatience I assisted at conferences held with him concerning quotas for renewing the war in Spain, in the very same room, at the cockpit, where the queen's ministers had been told in plain terms, a little before, by those of other allies, "that their masters would not consent, that the "Imperial and Spanish crowns should unite on "the same head." That the Dutch were not averse to all treaty, but meant none wherein Great Britain was to have any particular advantage, will appear from this; that their minister declared himself ready and authorised to stop the opposition made to the queen's measures, by presenting

senting a memorial, wherein he would declare, "that his masters entered into them, and were re-"solved not to continue the war for the reco-"very of Spain, provided the queen would consent "that they should garrison Gibraltar and Port-"mahon jointly with us, and share equally the As-"siento, the South Sea ship, and whatever should "be granted by the Spaniards to the queen and "her subjects." That the whigs engaged in this league with foreign powers against their country, as well as their queen, and with a phrensy more unaccountable than that which made and maintained the solemn league and covenant formerly, will appear from this; that their attempts were directed not only to wrest the negotiations out of the queen's hands, but to oblige their country to carry on the war, on the same unequal foot that had cost her already about twenty millions more than she ought to have contributed to it. For they not only continued to abet the emperor, whose inability to supply his quota was confessed; but the Dutch likewise, after the states had refused to ratify the treaty their minister signed at London toward the end of the year one thousand seven hundred and eleven, and by which the queen united herself more closely than ever to them; engaging to pursue the war, to conclude the peace, and to guaranty it, when concluded, jointly with them; "provided they would keep the engagements "they had taken with her, and the conditions of "proportionate expense under which our nation "had entered into the war." Upon such schemes

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as these was the opposition to the treaty of Utrecht carried on: and the means employed, and the means projected to be employed, were worthy of such schemes: open, direct, and indecent defiance of legal authority, secret conspiracies against the state, and base machinations against particular men, who had no other crime than that of endeavouring to conclude a war, under the authority of the queen, which a party in the nation endeavoured to prolong against her authority. Had the good policy of concluding the war been doubtful, it was certainly as lawful for those, who thought it good, to advise it, as it had been for those who thought it bad, to advise the contrary: and the decision of the sovereign on the throne ought to have terminated the contest. But he who had judged by the appearances of things on one side at that time would have been apt to think, that putting an end to the war, or to Magna Charta, was the same thing; that the queen on the throne had no right to govern independently of her successor; nor any of her subjects a right to administer the government under her, though called to it by her, except those whom she had thought fit to lay aside. Extravagant as these principles are, no other could justify the conduct held at that time by those who opposed the peace; and as I said just now, that the phrensy of this league was more unaccountable than that of the solemn league and covenant, I might have added, that it was not very many degrees less criminal. Some of those, who charged the queen's ministers after

after her death with imaginary treasons, had been guilty during her life of real treasons: and I can compare the folly and violence of the spirit that prevailed at that time, both before the conclusion of the peace, and, under pretence of danger to the succession, after it, to nothing more nearly than to the folly and violence of the spirit, that seised the tories soon after the accession of George the first. The latter indeed, which was provoked by unjust and impolitick persecution, broke out in open rebellion. The former might have done so, if the queen had lived a little longer. But to return.

The obstinate adherence of the Dutch to this league, in opposition to the queen, rendered the conferences of Utrecht, when they were opened, no better than mock conferences. Had the men who governed that commonwealth been wise and honest enough to unite, at least then, cordially with the queen, and, since they could not hinder a congress, to act in concert with her in it; we should have been still in time to maintain a sufficient union among the allies, and a sufficient superiority over the French. All the specifick demands that the former made, as well as the Dutch themselves, either to incumber the negotiation, or to have in reserve, according to the artifice usually employed on such occasions, certain points from which to depart in the course of it with advantage, would not have been obtained: but all the essential demands, all in particular that were really necessary to secure the barriers in the Low Countries

Countries and of the four circles against France, would have been so. For France must have continued, in this case, rather to sue for peace, than to treat on an equal foot. The first dauphin, son of Lewis the fourteenth, died several months before this congress began: the second dauphin, his grandson, and the wife and the eldest son of this prince, died, soon after it began, of the same unknown distemper, and were buried together in the same grave. Such family misfortunes, following a long series of national misfortunes, made the old king, though he bore them with much seeming magnanimity, desirous to get out of the war at any tolerable rate, that he might not run the risk of leaving a child of five years old, the present king, engaged in it. The queen did all that was morally possible, except giving up her honour in the negotiation, and the interests of her subjects in the conditions of peace, to procure this union with the states General. But all she could do was vain: and the same phrensy that had hindered the Dutch from improving to their and to the common advantage the publick misfortunes of France, hindered them from improving to the same purposes the private misfortunes of the house of Bourbon. They continued to flatter themselves, that they should force the queen out of her measures, by their intrigues with the party in Britain who opposed these measures, and even raise an insurrection against her. But these intrigues, and those of prince Eugene, were known, and disappointed; and monsieur Buys had the mortification,

mortification, to be reproached with them publickly, when he came to take leave of the lords of the council, by the earl of Oxford; who entered into many particulars, that could not be denied, of the private transactions of this sort, to which Buys had been a party, in compliance with his instructions, and, as I believe, much against his own sense and inclinations. As the season for taking the field advanced, the league proposed to defeat the success of the congress by the events of the campaign. But instead of defeating the success of the congress, the events of the campaign served only to turn this success in favour of France. At the beginning of the year, the queen, and the states, in concert, might have given the law to friend and foe, with great advantage to the former; and with such a detriment to the latter, as the causes of the war rendered just, the events of it reasonable, and the objects of it necessary. At the end of the year the allies were no longer in a state of giving, nor the French of receiving the law; and the Dutch had recourse to the queen's good offices, when they could oppose and durst insult her no longer. Even then, these offices were employed with zeal and with some effect, for them.

Thus the war ended, much more favourably to France than she expected, or they who put an end to it designed. The queen would have humbled and weakened this power. The allies who opposed her would have crushed it, and have raised another as exorbitant on the ruins of it.

Neither

Neither one nor the other succeeded, and they who meant to ruin the French power preserved it, by opposing those who meant to reduce it.

Since I have mentioned the events of the year one thousand seven hundred and twelve, and the decisive turn they gave to the negotiations in favour of France, give me leave to say something more on this subject. You will find that I shall do so with much impartiality. The disastrous events of the campaign in the Low Countries, and the consequences of them, have been imputed to the separation of the British troops from the army of the allies. The clamour against this measure was great at that time, and the prejudices which this clamour raised are great still among some men. But as clamour raised these prejudices, other prejudices gave birth to this clamour: and it is no wonder they should do so among persons bent on continuing the war; since I own very freely, that when the first step that led to this separation came to my knowledge, which was not an hour, by the way, before I writ by the queen's order to the Duke of Ormond, in the very words in which the order was advised and given, "that he should "not engage in any siege, nor hazard a battle, till "further order," I was surprised and hurt. So much, that if I had had an opportunity of speaking in private to the queen, after I had received monsieur De Torcy's letter to me on the subject, and before she went into the council, I should have spoken to her, I think, in the first heat, against it. The truth is, however, that the step was justifiable at that point of time in every

respect; and therefore that the consequences are to be charged to the account of those who drew them on themselves, not to the account of the queen, nor of the minister who advised her. The step was justifiable to the allies surely, since the queen took no more upon her, no not so much by far, in making it, as many of them had done by suspending, or endangering, or defeating operations in the heat of the war, when they declined to send their troops, or delayed the march of them, or neglected the preparations they were obliged to make on the most frivolous pretences. Your lordship will find in the course of your inquiries many particular instances of what is here pointed out in general. But I cannot help descending into some few of those that regard the emperor and the States General, who cried the loudest and with the most effect, though they had the least reason, on account of their own conduct, to complain of the queen's. With what face could the emperor, for instance, presume to complain of the orders sent to the Duke of Ormond? I say nothing of his deficiencies, which were so great, that he had at this very time little more than one regiment, that could be said properly to act against France and Spain at his sole charge; as I affirmed to prince Eugene before the lords of the council, and demonstrated upon paper the next day. I say nothing of all that preceded the year one thousand seven hundred and seven, on which I should have much to say. But I desire your lordship only to consider what you will find to have passed after the famous year one thousand

seven

seven hundred and six. Was it with the queen's approbation, or against her will, that the emperor made the treaty for the evacuation of Lombardy, and let out so great a number of French regiments time enough to recruit themselves at home, to march into Spain, and to destroy the British forces at Almanza? Was it with her approbation, or against her will, that, instead of employing all his forces and all his endeavours, to make the greatest design of the whole war, the enterprise on Toulon, succeed, he detached twelve thousand men to reduce the kingdom of Naples, that must have fallen of course? and that an opportunity of ruining the whole maritime force of France, and of ruining or subduing her provinces on that side was lost, merely by this unnecessary diversion, and by the conduct of prince Eugene, which left no room to doubt, that he gave occasion to this fatal disappointment on purpose, and in concert with the court of Vienna?

Turn your eyes, my lord, on the conduct of the States, and you will find reason to be astonished at the arrogance of the men who governed in them at this time, and who presumed to exclaim against a queen of Great Britain, for doing what their deputies had done more than once in that very country, and in the course of that very war, in the year one thousand seven hundred and twelve, at the latter end of a war, when conferences for treating a peace were opened, when the least sinister event in the field would take off from that superiority, which the allies had

in the congress; and when the past success of the war had already given them as much of this superiority as they wanted, to obtain a safe, advantageous, honourable, and lasting peace, the queen directed her general to suspend till further order the operations of her troops. In one thousand seven hundred and three, in the beginning of a war, when something was to be risked or no success to be expected, and when the bad situation of affairs in Germany and Italy required, in a particular manner, that efforts should be made in the Low Countries, and that the war should not languish there while it was unsuccessful every where else; the duke of Marlborough determined to attack the French, but the Dutch deputies would not suffer their troops to go on; defeated his design in the very moment of it's execution, if I remember well, and gave no other reason for their proceeding than that which is a reason against every battle, the possibility of being beaten. The circumstance of proximity to their frontier was urged, I know, and it was said, that their provinces would be exposed to the incursions of the French, if they lost the battle. But beside other answers to this vain pretence, it was obvious that they had ventured battles as near home as this would have been fought, and that the way to remove the enemy farther off was by action not inaction. Upon the whole matter; the Dutch deputies stopped the progress of the confederate army at this time, by exercising an arbitrary and independent authority over the troops of the States. In one thousand seven hundred and five,

when

when the success of the preceding campaign should have given them an entire confidence in the duke of Marlborough's conduct, when returning from the Moselle to the Low Countries, he began to make himself and the common cause amends, for the disappointment which pique and jealousy in the prince of Baden, or usual sloth and negligence in the Germans, had occasioned just before, by forcing the French lines; when he was in the full pursuit of this advantage, and when he was marching to attack an enemy half defeated, and more than half dispirited; nay when he had made his dispositions for attacking, and part of his troops had paſſed the Dyle—the deputies of the States once more tied up his hands, took from him an opportunity too fair to be lost; for these, I think, were some of the terms of his complaint: and in short the confederacy received an affront at least, where we might have obtained a victory. Let this that has been said serve as a specimen of the independency on the queen, her councils, and her generals, with which these powers acted in the course of the war; who were ashamed not to find fault, that the queen once, and at the latter end of it, presumed to suspend the operations of her troops till farther order. But be it that they foresaw what this farther order would be. They foresaw then, that as soon as Dunkirk should be put into the queen's hands, she would consent to a suspension of arms for two months, and invite them to do the same. Neither this foresight, nor the strong declaration, which the bishop of Bristol made by the queen's order at

Utrecht, and which showed them that her resolution was taken not to submit to the league into which they had entered against her, could prevail on them to make a right use of these two months, by endeavouring to renew their union and good understanding with the queen; though I can say with the greatest truth, and they could not doubt of it at the time, that she would have gone more than half-way to meet them, and that her ministers would have done their utmost to bring it about. Even then we might have resumed the superiority we began to lose in the congress; for the queen and the States uniting, the principal allies would have united with them: and, in this case, it would have been so much the interest of France to avoid any chance of seeing the war renewed, that she must, and she would, have made sure of peace, during the suspension, on much worse terms for herself and for Spain, than she made it afterward. But the prudent and sober states continued to act like froward children, or like men drunk with resentment and passion; and such will the conduct be of the wisest governments in every circumstance, where a spirit of faction and of private interest prevails among those who are at the head, over reason of state. After laying aside all decency in their behaviour towards the queen, they laid aside all caution for themselves. They declared "they would carry on the war without "her." Landrecy seemed, in their esteem, of more importance than Dunkirk; and the opportunity of wasting some French provinces, or of putting the whole event of the war on the decision of

of another battle, preferable to the other measure that lay open to them; that, I mean, of trying, in good earnest, and in an honest concert with the queen, during the suspension of arms, whether such terms of peace, as ought to satisfy them and the other allies, might not be imposed on France.

If the confederate army had broke into France, the campaign before this, or in any former campaign; and if the Germans and the Dutch had exercised then the same inhumanity, as the French had exercised in their provinces in former wars; if they had burnt Versailles, and even Paris, and if they had disturbed the ashes of the dead princes that repose at St. Denis; every good man would have felt the horrour, that such cruelties inspire: no man could have said, that the retaliation was unjust. But in one thousand seven hundred and twelve, it was too late, in every respect, to meditate such projects. If the French had been unprepared to defend their frontier, either for want of means, or in a vain confidence that the peace would be made, as our king Charles the second was unprepared to defend his coast at the latter end of his first war with Holland, the allies might have played a sure game in satisfying their vengeance on the French, as the Dutch did on us in one thousand six hundred and sixty-seven; and imposing harder terms on them than those they offered, or would have accepted. But this was not the case. The French army was, I believe, more numerous than the army of the allies, even before separation, and certainly in a much better

condition than two or three years before, when a deluge of blood was spilt to dislodge them, for we did no more, at Malplaquet. Would the Germans and the Dutch have found it more easy to force them at this time, than it was at that? Would not the French have fought with as much obstinacy to save Paris, as they did to save Mons? and, with all the regard due to the duke of Ormond and to prince Eugene, was the absence of the duke of Marlborough of no consequence? Turn this affair every way in your thoughts, my lord, and you will find that the Germans and the Dutch had nothing in theirs, but to break, at any rate, and at any risk, the negotiations that were begun, and to reduce Great Britain to the necessity of continuing, what she had been too long, a province of the confederacy. A province indeed, and not one of the best treated; since the confederates assumed a right of obliging her to keep her pacts with them, and of dispensing with their obligations to her; of exhausting her, without rule, or proportion, or measure, in the support of a war, to which she alone contributed more than all of them, and in which she had no longer an immediate interest, nor even any remote interest that was not common, or with respect to her, very dubious; and, after all this, of complaining that the queen presumed to hearken to overtures of peace, and to set a negotiation on foot, while their humour and ambition required, that the war should be prolonged for an indefinite time, and for a purpose that was either bad or indeterminate.

The

The suspension of arms, that began in the Low Countries, was continued, and extended afterward by the act I signed at Fontaine-Bleau. The fortune of the war turned at the same time: and all those disgraces followed, which obliged the Dutch to treat, and to desire the assistance of the queen, whom they had set at defiance so lately. This assistance they had, as effectually as it could be given in the circumstances, to which they had reduced themselves and the whole alliance: and the peace of Great Britain, Portugal, Savoy, Prussia, and the States General was made, without his Imperial majesty's concurrence, in the spring of one thousand seven hundred and thirteen: as it might have been made, much more advantageously for them all, in that of one thousand seven hundred and twelve. Less obstinacy on the part of the States, and perhaps more decisive resolutions on the part of the queen, would have wound up all these divided threads in one, and have finished this great work much sooner and better. I say, perhaps more decisive resolutions on the part of the queen; because although I think that I should have conveyed her orders for signing a treaty of peace with France, before the armies took the field, much more willingly, than I executed them afterward in signing that of the cessation of arms; yet I do not presume to decide, but shall desire your lordship to do so, on a review of all circumstances, some of which I shall just mention.

The league made for protracting the war having opposed the queen to the utmost of their power,

power, and by means of every sort, from the first appearances of a negotiation; the general effect of this violent opposition, on her and her ministers, was, to make them proceed by slower and more cautious steps: the particular effect of it was, to oblige them to open the eyes of the nation, and to inflame the people with a desire of peace, by showing, in the most publick and solemn manner, how unequally we were burdened, and how unfairly we were treated by our allies. The first gave an air of diffidence and timidity to their conduct, which encouraged the league, and gave vigour to the opposition. The second irritated the Dutch particularly: for the emperor and the other allies had the modesty at least not to pretend to bear any proportion in the expense of the war: and thus the two powers, whose union was the most essential, were the most at variance, and the queen was obliged to act in a closer concert with her enemy who desired peace, than she would have done if her allies had been less obstinately bent to protract the war. During these transactions, my lord Oxford, who had his correspondencies apart, and a private thread of negotiation always in his hands, entertained hopes that Philip would be brought to abandon Spain in favour of his father-in-law, and to content himself with the States of that prince, the kingdom of Sicily, and the preservation of his right of succession to the crown of France. Whether my lord had any particular reasons for entertaining these hopes, beside the general reasons founded on the condition

condition of France, on that of the Bourbon family, and on the disposition of Lewis the fourteenth, I doubt very much. That Lewis, who sought, and had need of seeking peace, almost at any rate, and who saw that he could not obtain it, even of the queen, unless Philip abandoned immediately the crown of Spain, or abandoned immediately, by renunciation and a solemn act of exclusion, all pretension to that of France; that Lewis was desirous of the former I cannot doubt. That Philip would have abandoned Spain, with the equivalents that have been mentioned, or either of them, I believe likewise: if the present king of France had died, when his father, mother, and eldest brother did: for they all had the same distemper. But Lewis would use no violent means to force his grandson; the queen would not continue the war to force him; Philip was too obstinate, and his wife too ambitious, to quit the crown of Spain, when they had discovered our weakness, and felt their own strength in that country, by their success in the campaign of one thousand seven hundred and ten: after which my lord Stanhope himself was convinced, that Spain could not be conquered, nor kept, if it was conquered, without a much greater army than it was possible for us to send thither. In that situation it was wild to imagine, as the earl of Oxford imagined, or pretended to imagine, that they would quit the crown of Spain, for a remote and uncertain prospect of succeeding to that of France, and content themselves to be, in the mean time, princes

of

of very small dominions. Philip therefore, after struggling long that he might not be obliged to make his option till the succession of France lay open to him, was obliged to make it, and made it, for Spain. Now this, my lord, was the very crisis of the negotiation: and to this point I apply what I said above of the effect of more decisive resolutions on the part of the queen. It was plain, that, if she made the campaign in concert with her allies, she could be no longer mistress of the negotiations, nor have almost a chance for conducting them to the issue she proposed. Our ill success in the field would have rendered the French less tractable in the congress: our good success there would have rendered the allies so. On this principle the queen suspended the operations of her troops, and then concluded the cessation.

Compare now the appearances and effect of this measure, with the appearances and effect that another measure would have had. In order to arrive at any peace, it was necessary to do what the queen did, or to do more: and, in order to arrive at a good one, it was necessary to be prepared to carry on the war, as well as to make a show of it: for she had the hard task upon her, of guarding against her allies, and her enemies both. But in that ferment, when few men considered any thing coolly, the conduct of her general, after he took the field, though he covered the allies in the siege of Quesnoy, corresponded ill, in appearance, with the declarations of carrying on

on the war vigorously, that had been made, on several occasions, before the campaign opened. It had an air of double dealing: and as such it passed among those, who did not combine in their thoughts all the circumstances of the conjuncture, or who were infatuated with the national necessity of continuing the war. The clamour could not have been greater, if the queen had signed her peace separately: and, I think, the appearances might have been explained as favourably in one case, as in the other. From the death of the emperor Joseph, it was neither our interest, nor the common interest, well understood, to set the crown of Spain on the present emperor's head. As soon therefore as Philip had made his option, and if she had taken this resolution early, his option would have been sooner made, I presume that the queen might have declared, that she would not continue the war an hour longer to procure Spain for his Imperial Majesty; that the engagements, she had taken while he was archduke, bound her no more; that, by his accession to the empire, the very nature of them was altered; that she took effectual measures to prevent, in any future time, a union of the crowns of France and Spain, and, upon the same principle, would not consent, much less fight, to bring about an immediate union of the Imperial and Spanishcrowns; that they, who insisted to protract the war, intended this union; that they could intend nothing else, since they ventured to break with her, rather than to treat, and were so eager to put the reasonable satisfaction, that they might

might have in every other case without hazard, on the uncertain events of the war; that she would not be imposed on any longer in this manner, and that she had ordered her ministers to sign her treaty with France, on the surrender of Dunkirk into her hands; that she pretended not to prescribe to her allies; but that she had insisted, in their behalf, on certain conditions, that France was obliged to grant to those of them, who should sign their treaties at the same time as she did, or who should consent to an immediate cessation of arms, and during the cessation treat under her mediation. There had been more frankness, and more dignity in this proceeding, and the effect must have been more advantageous. France would have granted more for a separate peace, than for a cessation: and the Dutch would have been more influenced by the prospect of one, than of the other: especially since this proceeding would have been very different from theirs at Munster, and at Nimeghen, where they abandoned their allies, without any other pretence than the particular advantage they found in doing so. A suspension of the operations of the queen's troops, nay a cessation of arms between her and France, was not definitive; and they might, and they did, hope to drag her back under their and the German yoke. This therefore was not sufficient to check their obstinacy, nor to hinder them from making all the unfortunate haste they did make to get themselves beaten at Denain. But they would possibly have laid aside their vain hopes, if they had seen the queen's ministers ready

ready to sign her treaty of peace, and those of some principal allies ready to sign at the same time; in which case the mischief, that followed, had been prevented, and better terms of peace had been obtained for the confederacy: a prince of the house of Bourbon, who could never be king of France, would have sat on the Spanish throne instead of an emperor: the Spanish sceptre would have been weakened in the hands of one, and the Imperial sceptre would have been strengthened in those of the other: France would have had no opportunity of recovering from former blows, nor of finishing a long unsuccessful war by two successful campaigns: her ambition, and her power, would have declined with her old king, and under the minority that followed: one of them at least might have been so reduced by the terms of peace, if the defeat of the allies in one thousand seven hundred and twelve, and the loss of so many towns as the French took in that and the following year, had been prevented, that the other would have been no longer formidable, even supposing it to have continued; whereas I suppose that the tranquillity of Europe is more due, at this time, to want of ambition, than to want of power, on the part of France. But, to carry the comparison of these two measures to the end, it may be supposed that the Dutch would have taken the same part, on the queen's declaring a separate peace, as they took on her declaring a cessation. The preparations for the campaign in the Low Countries were made; the Dutch, like the other confederates, had a just confidence in

their

their own troops, and an unjust contempt for those of the enemy; they were transported from their usual sobriety and caution by the ambitious prospect of large acquisitions, which had been opened artfully to them; the rest of the confederate army was composed of Imperial and German troops: so that the Dutch, the Imperialists, and the other Germans, having an interest to decide which was no longer the interest of the whole confederacy, they might have united against the queen in one case, as they did in the other; and the mischief that followed to them and the common cause might not have been prevented. This might have been the case no doubt. They might have flattered themselves, that they should be able to break into France, and to force Philip, by the distress brought on his grandfather, to resign the crown of Spain to the emperor, even after Great Britain, and Portugal, and Savoy too, perhaps, were drawn out of the war: for these princes desired as little as the queen, to see the Spanish crown on the emperor's head. But even in this case, though the madness would have been greater, the effect would not have been worse. The queen would have been able to serve these confederates as well by being mediator in the negotiations, as they left it in her power to do, by being a party in them: and Great Britain would have had the advantage of being delivered so much sooner from a burden, which whimsical and wicked politicks had imposed, and continued upon her till it was become intolerable. Of these two measures, at the time when we might have taken

taken either, there were persons who thought the last preferable to the former. But it never came into publick debate. Indeed it never could; too much time having been lost in waiting for the option of Philip, and the suspension and cessation having been brought before the council rather as a measure taken, than a matter to be debated. If your lordship, or any one else, should judge, that in such circumstances as those of the confederacy in the beginning of one thousand seven hundred and twelve, the latter measure ought to have been taken, and the Gordian knot to have been cut rather than to suffer a mock treaty to languish on, with so much advantage to the French as the disunion of the allies gave them; in short, if slowness, perplexity, inconsistency, and indecision should be objected, in some instances, to the queen's councils at that time; if it should be said particularly, that she did not observe the precise moment when the conduct of the league formed against her, being exposed to mankind, would have justified any part she should have taken (though she declared, soon after the moment was passed, that this conduct had set her free from all engagements) and when she ought to have taken that of drawing, by one bold measure, her allies out of the war, or herself out of the confederacy, before she lost her influence on France: if all this should be objected, yet would the proofs brought to support these objections show, that we were better allies than politicians; that the desire the queen had to treat in concert with her confede-

rates, and the resolution she took not to sign without them, made her bear what no crowned head had ever borne before; and that where she erred, she erred principally by the patience, the compliance, and the condescension she exercised towards them, and towards her own subjects in league with them. Such objections as these may lie to the queen's conduct, in the course of this great affair; as well as objections of human infirmity to that of the persons employed by her in the transactions of it: from which neither those who preceded, nor those who succeeded, have, I presume, been free. But the principles on which they proceeded were honest, the means they used were lawful, and the event they proposed to bring about was just. Whereas the very foundation of all the opposition to the peace was laid in injustice and folly: for what could be more unjust, than the attempt of the Dutch and the Germans, to force the queen to continue a war for their private interest and ambition, the disproportionate expense of which oppressed the commerce of her subjects, and loaded them with debts for ages yet to come? a war, the object of which was so changed, that from the year one thousand seven hundred and eleven she made it not only without any engagement, but against her own and the common interest? What could be more foolish; you will think that I soften the term too much, and you will be in the right to think so: what could be more foolish, than the attempt of a party in Britain, to protract a war so ruinous to their country,

country, without any reason that they durst avow, except that of wreaking the resentments of Europe on France, and that of uniting the Imperial and Spanish crowns on an Austrian head? one of which was to purchase revenge at a price too dear; and the other was to expose the liberties of Europe to new dangers, by the conclusion of a war which had been made to assert and secure them.

I have dwelt the longer on the conduct of those who promoted, and of those who opposed, the negotiations of the peace made at Utrecht, and on the comparison of the measure pursued by the queen with that which she might have pursued, because the great benefit we ought to reap from the study of history cannot be reaped, unless we accustom ourselves to compare the conduct of different governments, and different parties, in the same conjunctures, and to observe the measures they did pursue, and the measures they might have pursued, with the actual consequences, that followed one, and the possible or probable consequences, that might have followed the other. By this exercise of the mind, the study of history anticipates, as it were, experience, as I have observed in one of the first of these letters, and prepares us for action. If this consideration should not plead a sufficient excuse for my prolixity on this head, I have one more to add that may. A rage of warring possessed a party in our nation till the death of the late queen: a rage of negotiating has possessed the same party of men, ever

since. You have seen the consequences of one: you see actually those of the other. The rage of warring confirmed the beggary of our nation, which began as early as the revolution; but then it gave, in the last war, reputation to our arms, and our councils too. For though I think, and must always think, that the principle, on which we acted after departing from that laid down in the grand alliance of one thousand seven hundred and one, was wrong; yet must we confess that it was pursued wisely, as well as boldly. The rage of negotiating has been a chargeable rage likewise, at least as chargeable in it's proportion. Far from paying our debts, contracted in war, they continue much the same, after three and twenty years of peace. The taxes that oppress our mercantile interest the most are still in mortgage; and those that oppress the landed interest the most, instead of being laid on extraordinary occasions, are become the ordinary funds for the current service of every year. This is grievous, and the more so to any man, who has the honour of his country, as well as her prosperity at heart, because we have not, in this case, the airy consolation we had in the other. The rage of negotiating began twenty years ago, under pretence of consummating the treaty of Utrecht: and, from that time to this, our ministers have been in one perpetual maze. They have made themselves and us, often, objects of aversion to the powers on the continent: and we are become at last objects of contempt, even to the Spaniards. What other effect

effect could our absurd conduct have? What other return has it deserved? We came exhausted out of long wars? and, instead of pursuing the measures necessary to give us means and opportunity to repair our strength and to diminish our burdens, our ministers have acted, from that time to this, like men who sought pretences to keep the nation in the same exhausted condition, and under the same load of debt. This may have been their view perhaps: and we could not be surprised, if we heard the same men declare national poverty necessary to support the present government, who have so frequently declared corruption and a standing army to be so. Your good sense, my lord, your virtue, and your love of your country, will always determine you to oppose such vile schemes, and to contribute your utmost towards the cure of both these kinds of rage; the rage of warring, without any proportionable interest of our own, for the ambition of others; and the rage of negotiating on every occasion, at any rate, without a sufficient call to it, and without any part of that deciding influence which we ought to have. Our nation inhabits an island, and is one of the principal nations of Europe; but to maintain this rank, we must take the advantages of this situation, which have been neglected by us for almost half a century: we must always remember, that we are not part of the continent, but we must never forget, that we are neighbours to it. I will conclude, by applying a rule, that Horace gives for the conduct of an epick

or dramatick poem, to the part Great Britain ought to take in the affairs of the continent, if you allow me to transform Britannia into a male divinity, as the verse requires.

> Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
> Inciderit.

If these reflections are just, and I should not have offered them to your lordship, had they not appeared both just and important to my best understanding, you will think that I have not spent your time unprofitably in making them, and exciting you by them to examine the true interest of your country relatively to foreign affairs; and to compare it with those principles of conduct, that, I am persuaded, have no other foundation than party-designs, prejudices, and habits, the private interest of some men, and the ignorance and rashness of others.

My letter is grown so long, that I shall say nothing to your lordship at this time concerning the study of modern history, relatively to the interests of your country in domestick affairs; and I think there will be no need to do so at any other. The History of the rebellion by your great grandfather, and his private memorials, which your lordship has in manuscript, will guide you surely as far as they go: where they leave you, your lordship must not expect any history; for we have more reason to make this complaint, "abest enim historia litteris nostris," than Tully had to put it into the mouth of Atticus, in his first book

book of laws. But where history leaves you, it is wanted least: the traditions of this century, and of the latter end of the last, are fresh. Many, who were actors in some of these events, are alive; and many, who have conversed with those that were actors in others. The publick is in possession of several collections and memorials, and several there are in private hands. You will want no materials to form true notions of transactions so recent. Even pamphlets, writ on different sides and on different occasions in our party disputes, and histories of no more authority than pamphlets, will help you to come at truth. Read them with suspicion, my lord, for they deserve to be suspected; pay no regard to the epithets given, nor to the judgments passed; neglect all declamation, weigh the reasoning, and advert to fact. With such precautions, even Burnet's history may be of some use. In a word, your lordship will want no help of mine to discover, by what progression the whole constitution of our country, and even the character of our nation, has been altered: nor how much a worse use, in a national sense, though a better in the sense of party politicks, the men called Whigs have made of long wars and new systems of revenue, since the revolution; than the men called Tories made, before it, of long peace, and stale prerogative. When you look back three or four generations ago, you will see, that the English were a plain, perhaps a rough, but a good-natured, hospitable

people, jealous of their liberties, and able as well as ready to defend them, with their tongues, their pens, and their swords. The restoration began to turn hospitality into luxury, pleasure into debauch, and country peers and country commoners into courtiers and men of mode. But while our luxury was young, it was little more than elegance: the debauch of that age was enlivened with wit, and varnished over with gallantry. The courtiers and the men of mode knew what the constitution was, respected it, and often asserted it. Arts and sciences flourished, and, if we grew more trivial, we were not become either grossly ignorant, or openly profligate. Since the revolution, our kings have been reduced indeed to a seeming annual dependance on parliament; but the business of parliament, which was esteemed in general a duty before, has been exercised in general as a trade since. The trade of parliament, and the trade of funds, have grown universal. Men, who stood forward in the world, have attended to little else. The frequency of parliaments, that increased their importance, and should have increased the respect for them, has taken off from their dignity: and the spirit that prevailed, while the service in them was duty, has been debased since it became a trade. Few know, and scarce any respect, the British constitution: that of the Church has been long since derided; that of the State as long neglected; and both have been left at the mercy of the men

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in power, whoever those men were. Thus the Church, at least the hierarchy, however sacred in it's origin or wise in it's institution, is become a useless burden on the State: and the State is become, under ancient and known forms, a new and undefinable monster; composed of a king without monarchical splendour, a senate of nobles without aristocratical independency, and a senate of commons without democratical freedom. In the mean time, my lord, the very idea of wit, and all that can be called taste, has been lost among the great; arts and sciences are scarce alive; luxury has been increased but not refined; corruption has been established, and is avowed. When governments are worn out, thus it is: the decay appears in every instance. Publick and private virtue, publick and private spirit, science, and wit, decline all together.

That you, my lord, may have a long and glorious share in restoring all these, and in drawing our government back to the true principles of it, I wish most heartily. Whatever errours I may have committed in publick life, I have always loved my country: whatever faults may be objected to me in private life, I have always loved my friend; whatever usage I have received from my country, it shall never make me break with her; whatever usage I have received from my friends, I shall never break with one of them, while I think him a friend to my country. These are the sentiments of my heart. I know

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they are those of your lordship's: and a communion of such sentiments is a tie, that will engage me to be, as long as I live,

My Lord,

Your most faithful servant.

A PLAN

FOR A

GENERAL HISTORY OF EUROPE.

LETTER I.

I SHALL take the liberty of writing to you a little oftener than the three or four times a year, which you tell me, are all you can allow yourself to write to those you like best: and yet I declare to you with great truth, that you never knew me so busy in your life, as I am at present. You must not imagine from hence, that I am writing memoirs of myself. The subject is too slight to descend to posterity, in any other manner, than by that occasional mention which may be made of any little actor in the history of our age. Sylla, Cæsar, and others of that rank, were, while they lived, at the head of mankind: their story was in some sort the story of the world, and such as might very properly be transmitted under their names to future generations. But for those who have acted much inferiour parts, if they publish the piece, and call it after their own names, they

they are impertinent: if they publish only their own share in it, they inform mankind by halves, and neither give much instruction, nor create much attention. France abounds with writers of this sort, and I think, we fall into the other extreme. Let me tell you, on this occasion, what has sometimes come into my thoughts.

There is hardly any century in history which began by opening so great a scene, as the century wherein we live, and shall, I suppose, die. Compare it with others, even the most famous, and you will think so. I will sketch the two last, to help your memory.

The loss of that balance which Laurence of Medicis had preserved, during his time, in Italy; the expedition of Charles the eighth to Naples; the intrigues of the duke of Milan, who spun, with all the refinements of art, that net wherein he was taken at last himself; the successful dexterity of Ferdinand the catholick, who built one pillar of the Austrian greatness in Spain, in Italy, and in the Indies; as the succession of the house of Burgundy, joined to the imperial dignity and the hereditary countries, established another in the upper and lower Germany: these causes, and many others, combined to form a very extraordinary conjuncture; and by their consequences, to render the sixteenth century fruitful of great events, and of astonishing revolutions.

The beginning of the seventeenth opened still a greater and more important scene. The Spanish yoke was well-nigh imposed on Italy by the famous

famous triumvirate, Toledo at Milan, Ossuna at Naples, and La Cueva, at Venice. The distractions of France, as well as the state-policy of the queen mother, seduced by Rome, and amused by Spain; the despicable character of our James the first, the rashness of the elector Palatine, the bad intelligence of the princes and states of the league in Germany, the mercenary temper of John George of Saxony, and the great qualities of Maximilian of Bavaria, raised Ferdinand the second to the imperial throne; when, the males of the elder branch of the Austrian family in Germany being extinguished at the death of Matthias, nothing was more desirable, nor perhaps more practicable, than to throw the empire into another house. Germany ran the same risk as Italy had done: Ferdinand seemed more likely, even than Charles the fifth had been, to become absolute master: and, if France had not furnished the greatest minister, and the North the greatest captain of that age, in the same point of time, Vienna and Madrid would have given the law to the western world.

As the Austrian scale sunk, that of Bourbon rose. The true date of the rise of that power, which has made the kings of France so considerable in Europe, goes up as high as Charles the seventh, and Lewis the eleventh. The weakness of our Henry the sixth, the loose conduct of Edward the fourth, and perhaps the oversights of Henry the seventh, helped very much to knit that monarchy together, as well as to enlarge it.

Advantage

Advantage might have been taken of the divisions which religion occasioned; and supporting the protestant party in France would have kept that crown under restraints, and under inabilities, in some measure equal to those which were occasioned anciently by the vast alienations of it's demesnes, and by the exorbitant power of it's vassals. But James the first was incapable of thinking with sense, or acting with spirit. Charles the first had an imperfect glimpse of his true interest, but his uxorious temper, and the extravagancy of that madman Buckingham, gave Richelieu time to finish a great part of his project; and the miseries that followed in England gave Mazarin time and opportunity to complete the system. The last great act of this cardinal's administration was the Pyrenean treaty.

Here I would begin, by representing the face of Europe such as it was at that epocha, the interests and the conduct of England, France, Spain, Holland, and the empire. A summary recapitulation should follow of all the steps taken by France, during more than twenty years, to arrive at the great object she had proposed to herself in making this treaty: the most solemn article of which the minister, who negotiated it, designed should be violated; as appears by his letters, writ from the island of Pheasants, if I mistake not. After this, another draught of Europe should have it's place, according to the relations, which the several powers stood in, one towards another, in one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight: and the alterations

alterations which the revolution in England made in the politicks of Europe. A summary account should follow of the events of the war that ended in one thousand six hundred and ninety-seven, with the different views of king William the third, and Lewis the fourteenth, in making the peace of Ryswick; which matter has been much canvassed, and is little understood. Then the dispositions made by the partition treaties, and the influences and consequences of these treaties; and a third draught of the state of Europe at the death of Charles the second of Spain. All this would make the subject of one or two books, and would be the most proper introduction imaginable to a history of that war with which our century began, and of the peace which followed.

This war, foreseen for above half a century, had been, during all that time, the great and constant object of the councils of Europe. The prize to be contended for was the richest that ever had been staked since those of the Persian and Roman empires. The union of two powers, which, separately, and in opposition, had aimed at universal monarchy, was apprehended. The confederates therefore engaged in it, to maintain a balance between the two houses of Austria and Bourbon, in order to preserve their security, and to assert their independance. But with the success of the war they changed their views: and, if ambition began it on the side of France, ambition continued it on the other. The battles, the sieges, the surprising revolutions which happened in the course of this war,

war, are not to be parallelled in any period of the same compass. The motives, and the measures, by which it was protracted, the true reasons why it ended in a manner, which appeared not proportionable to it's success; and the new political state, into which Europe was thrown by the treaties of Utrecht and Baden, are subjects on which few persons have the necessary informations, and yet every one speaks with assurance, and even with passion. I think I could speak on them with some knowledge, and with as much indifference as Polybius does of the negotiations of his father Lycortas, even in those points where I was myself an actor.

I will even confess to you, that I should not despair of performing this part better than the former. There is nothing in my opinion so hard to execute, as those political maps, if you will allow me such an expression, and those systems of hints, rather than relations of events, which are necessary to connect and explain them; and which must be so concise, and yet so full; so complicate, and yet so clear. I know nothing of this sort well done by the ancients. Sallust's introduction, as well as that of Thucydides, might serve almost for any other piece of the Roman or Greek story, as well as for those which these two great authors chose. Polybius does not come up, in his introduction, to this idea neither. Among the moderns, the first book of Machiavel's history of Florence is a noble original of this kind: and

perhaps

perhaps father Paul's history of benefices is, in the same kind of composition, inimitable.

These are a few of those thoughts, which come into my mind when I consider how incumbent it is on every man, that he should be able to give an account even of his leisure; and in the midst of solitude be of some use to society.

I know not whether I shall have courage enough to undertake the task I have chalked out: I distrust my abilities with reason, and I shall want several informations, not easy, I doubt, for me to obtain. But, in all events, it will not be possible for me to go about it this year; the reasons of which would be long enough to fill another letter, and I doubt that you will think this grown too bulky already.

Adieu.

OF THE

TRUE USE

OF

RETIREMENT AND STUDY:

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD BATHURST.

LETTER II.

SINCE my last to your lordship, this is the first favourable opportunity I have had of keeping the promise I made you. I will avoid prolixity, as much as I can, in a first draught of my thoughts but I must give you them as they rise in my mind, without staying to marshal them in close order.

As proud as we are of human reason, nothing can be more absurd than the general system of human life, and human knowledge. This faculty of distinguishing true from false, right from wrong, and what is agreeable from what is repugnant to nature, either by one act, or by a longer process of intuition, has not been given with so sparing a hand, as many appearances would make us apt to believe. If it was cultivated, therefore,

therefore, as early and as carefully as it might be, and if the exercise of it was left generally as free as it ought to be, our common notions and opinions would be more consonant to truth than they are: and, truth being but one, they would be more uniform likewise.

But this rightful mistress of human life and knowledge, whose proper office it is to preside over both, and to direct us in the conduct of one and the pursuit of the other, becomes degraded in the intellectual œconomy. She is reduced to a mean and servile state, to the vile drudgery of conniving at principles, defending opinions, and confirming habits, that are none of hers. They who do her most honour, who consult her oftenest, and obey her too very often, are still guilty of limiting her authority according to maxims, and rules, and schemes, that chance, or ignorance, or interest, first devised, and that custom sanctifies: custom, that result of the passions and prejudices of many, and of the designs of a few: that ape of reason, who usurps her seat, exercises her power, and is obeyed by mankind in her stead. Men find it easy, and government makes it profitable, to concur in established systems of speculation and practice: and the whole turn of education prepares them to live upon credit all their lives. Much pains are taken, and time bestowed, to teach us what to think; but little or none of either, to instruct us how to think. The magazine of the memory is stored and stuffed betimes; but the conduct of the under-

standing is all along neglected, and the free exercise of it is, in effect, forbid in all places, and in terms in some.

There is a strange distrust of human reason in every human institution: this distrust is so apparent, that an habitual submission to some authority, or other, is forming in us from our cradles; that principles of reasoning, and matters of fact, are inculcated in our tender minds, before we are able to exercise that reason; and that, when we are able to exercise it, we are either forbid, or frightened from doing so, even on things that are themselves the proper objects of reason, or that are delivered to us upon an authority whose sufficiency or insufficiency is so most evidently.

On many subjects, such as the general laws of natural religion, and the general rules of society and good policy, men of all countries and languages, who cultivate their reason, judge alike. The same premises have led them to the same conclusions, and so following the same guide, they have trod in the same path: at least the differences are small, easily reconciled, and such as could not, of themselves, contradistinguish nation from nation, religion from religion, and sect from sect. How comes it then, that there are other points, on which the most opposite opinions are entertained, and some of these with so much heat, and fury, that the men on one side of the hedge will die for the affirmative, and the men on the other for the negative? "Toute opinion est assez forte pour se faire

épouser

épouser au prix de la vie," says Montagne, whom I often quote, as I do Seneca, rather for the smartness of expression, than the weight or newness of matter. Look narrowly into it, and you will find that the points agreed on, and the points disputed, are not proportionable to the common sense and general reason of mankind. Nature and truth are the same every where, and reason shows them every where alike. But the accidental and other causes, which give rise and growth to opinions, both in speculation and practice, are of infinite variety; and wherever these opinions are once confirmed by custom and propagated by education, various, inconsistent, contradictory as they are, they all pretend (and all their pretences are backed by pride, by passion, and by interest) to have reason, or revelation, or both, on their side; though neither reason nor revelation can be possibly on the side of more than one, and may be possibly on the side of none.

Thus it happens that the people of Tibet are Tartars and idolaters; that they are Turks and Mahometans at Constantinople, Italians and Papists at Rome; and how much soever education may be less confined, and the means of knowledge more attainable, in France and our own country, yet thus it happens in great measure, that Frenchmen and Roman Catholicks are bred at Paris, and Englishmen and Protestants at London. For men, indeed, properly speaking, are bred no where: every one thinks the system, as he speaks the language, of his country; at

least there are few that think, and none that act, in any country, according to the dictates of pure unbiassed reason; unless they may be said to do so when reason directs them to speak and act according to the system of their country or sect, at the same time as she leads them to think according to that of nature and truth.

Thus the far greatest part of mankind appears reduced to a lower state than other animals, in that very respect, on account of which we claim so great superiority over them: because instinct, that has it's due effect, is preferable to reason that has not. I suppose in this place, with philosophers, and the vulgar, that which I am in no wise ready to affirm, that other animals have no share of human reason: for, let me say by the way, it is much more likely other animals should share the human, which is denied, than that man should share the divine reason, which is affirmed. But, supposing our monopoly of reason, would not your lordship choose to walk upon four legs, to wear a long tail, and to be called a beast, with the advantage of being determined by irresistible and unerring instinct to those truths, that are necessary to your well-being; rather than to walk on two legs, to wear no tail, and to be honoured with the title of man, at the expense of deviating from them perpetually? Instinct acts spontaneously whenever it's action is necessary, and directs the animal according to the purpose for which it was implanted in him. Reason is a nobler and more extensive faculty;

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for it extends to the unnecessary as well as necessary, and to satisfy our curiosity as well as our wants: but reason must be excited, or she will remain inactive; she must be left free, or she will conduct us wrong, and carry us farther astray from her own precincts, than we should go without her help: in the first case, we have no sufficient guide; and in the second, the more we employ our reason, the more unreasonable we are.

Now if all this be so, if reason has so little, and ignorance, passion, interest, and custom so much to do, in forming our opinions and our habits, and in directing the whole conduct of human life; is it not a thing desirable by every thinking man, to have the opportunity, indulged to so few by the course of accidents, the opportunity, "secum esse, et secum vivere," of living some years at least to ourselves, and for ourselves, in a state of freedom, under the laws of reason, instead of passing our whole time in a state of vassalage under those of authority and custom? Is it not worth our while to contemplate ourselves, and others, and all the things of this world, once before we leave them, through the medium of pure, and, if I may say so, of undefiled reason? Is it not worth our while to approve or condemn, on our own authority, what we receive in the beginning of life, on the authority of other men, who were not then better able to judge for us, than we are now to judge for ourselves?

That this may be done, and has been done

to some degree, by men who remained much more mingled, than I design to be for the future, in the company and business of the world, I shall not deny: but still it is better done in retreat, and with greater ease and pleasure. While we remain in the world, we are all fettered down more or less to one common level, and have neither all the leisure, nor all the means and advantages, to soar above it, which we may procure to ourselves, by breaking these fetters, in retreat. To talk of abstracting ourselves from matter, laying aside body, and being resolved, as it were, into pure intellect, is proud, metaphysical, unmeaning jargon: but to abstract ourselves from the prejudices, and habits, and pleasures, and business of the world, is no more than many are, though all are not, capable of doing. They who can do this, may elevate their souls in retreat to a higher station; and may take from thence such a view of the world, as the second Scipio took in his dream, from the seats of the blessed, when the whole Earth appeared so little to him, that he could scarce discern that speck of dirt, the Roman empire. Such a view as this will increase our knowledge, by showing us our ignorance; will distinguish every degree of probability from the lowest to the highest, and mark the distance between that and certainty; will dispel the intoxicating fumes of philosophical presumption, and teach us to establish our peace of mind, where alone it can rest securely, in resignation: in short, such a view will render life more agreeable, and death less

less terrible. Is not this business, my lord? Is not this pleasure too, the highest pleasure? The world can afford us none such: we must retire from the world to taste it with a full gust; but we shall taste it the better for having been in the world. The share of sensual pleasures, that a man of my age can promise himself, is hardly worth attention: he should be sated, he will be soon disabled; and very little reflection surely will suffice, to make his habits of this kind lose their power over him, in proportion at least as his power of indulging them diminishes. Besides, your lordship knows that my scheme of retirement excludes none of these pleasures that can be taken with decency and conveniency; and to say the truth, I believe that I allow myself more in speculation, than I shall find I want in practice. As to the habits of business, they can have no hold on one who has been so long tired with it. You may object, that though a man has discarded these habits, and has not even the embers of ambition about him to revive them, yet he cannot renounce all public business as absolutely as I seem to do; because a better principle, a principle of duty, may summon him to the service of his country. I will answer you with great sincerity. No man has higher notions of this duty than I have. I think that scarce any age, or circumstances, can discharge us entirely from it; no, not my own. But as we are apt to take the impulse of our own passions for a call to the performance of this duty; so when these passions impel

impel us no longer, the call that puts us upon action must be real, and loud too. Add to this, that there are different methods, proportioned to different circumstances and situations, of performing the same duty. In the midst of retreat, wherever it may be fixed, I may contribute to defend and preserve the British constitution of government: and you, my lord, may depend upon me, that whenever I can, I will. Should any one ask you, in this case, from whom I expect my reward; answer him by declaring to whom I pay this service; "Deo immortali, qui "me non accipere modo hæc a majoribus voluit, "sed etiam posteris prodere."

But, to lead the life I propose with satisfaction and profit, renouncing the pleasures and business of the world, and breaking the habits of both, is not sufficient: the supine creature, whose understanding is superficially employed, through life, about a few general notions, and is never bent to a close and steady pursuit of truth, may renounce the pleasures and business of the world, for even in the business of the world we see such creatures often employed, and may break the habits; nay he may retire and drone away life in solitude, like a monk, or like him over the door of whose house, as if his house had been his tomb, somebody writ, "Here lies such a one." But no such man will be able to make the true use of retirement. The employment of his mind, that would have been agreeable and easy if he had accustomed himself to it early, will be unplea-

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sant and impracticable late: such men lose their intellectual powers for want of exerting them; and, having trifled away youth, are reduced to the necessity of trifling away age. It fares with the mind just as it does with the body. He who was born with a texture of brain as strong as that of Newton, may become unable to perform the common rules of arithmetick: just as he who has the same elasticity, in his muscles, the same suppleness in his joints, and all his nerves and sinews as well braced as Jacob Hall, may become a fat unwieldy sluggard. Yet farther, the implicit creature, who has thought it all his life needless, or unlawful, to examine the principles or facts that he took originally on trust, will be as little able as the other to improve his solitude to any good purpose: unless we call it a good purpose, for that sometimes happens, to confirm and exalt his prejudices, so that he may live and die in one continued delirium. The confirmed prejudices of a thoughtful life are as hard to change as the confirmed habits of an indolent life: and as some must trifle away age because they have trifled away youth, others must labour on in a maze of errour, because they have wandered there too long to find their way out.

There is a prejudice in China in favour of little feet, and therefore the feet of girls are swathed and bound up from the cradle, so that the women of that country are unable to walk without tottering and stumbling all their lives. Among the savages of America, their are some who hold flat-

heads

heads and long ears in great esteem, and therefore press the one and draw down the others so hard from their infancy, that they destroy irrecoverably the true proportions of nature, and continue all their lives ridiculous to every sight but their own. Just so, the first of these characters cannot make any progress, and the second will not attempt to make any, in an impartial search after real knowledge.

To set about acquiring the habits of meditation and study late in life, is like getting into a go-cart with a gray beard, and learning to walk when we have lost the use of our legs. In general, the foundations of a happy old age must be laid in youth: and in particular, he who has not cultivated his reason young, will be utterly unable to improve it old. "Manent ingenia senibus, modo "permaneant studium et industria."

Not only a love of study, and a desire of knowledge, must have grown up with us, but such an industrious application likewise, as requires the whole vigour of the mind to be exerted in the pursuit of truth, through long trains of ideas, and all those dark recesses wherein man, not God, has hid it.

This love and this desire I have felt all my life, and I am not quite a stranger to this industry and application. There has been something always ready to whisper in my ear, while I ran the course of pleasure and of business.

"Solve senescentem mature sanus equum."

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But my genius, unlike the demon of Socrates, whispered so softly, that very often I heard him not, in the hurry of those passions by which I was transported. Some calmer hours there were: in them I hearkened to him. Reflection had often it's turn, and the love of study and the desire of knowledge have never quite abandoned me. I am not therefore entirely unprepared for the life I will lead, and it is not without reason, that I promise myself more satisfaction in the latter part of it, than I ever knew in the former.

Your lordship may think this perhaps a little too sanguine, for one who has lost so much time already: you may put me in mind, that human life has no second spring, no second summer: you may ask me, what I mean by sowing in autumn, and whether I hope to reap in winter? My answer will be, that I think very differently from most men, of the time we have to pass, and the business we have to do in this world. I think we have more of one, and less of the other, than is commonly supposed. Our want of time, and the shortness of human life, are some of the principal commonplace complaints, which we prefer against the established order of things: they are the grumblings of the vulgar, and the pathetick lamentations of the philosopher; but they are impertinent and impious in both. The man of business despises the man of pleasure, for squandering his time away; the man of pleasure pities or laughs at the man of business, for the same thing: and yet both concur superciliously and absurdly

absurdly to find fault with the Supreme Being, for having given them so little time. The philosopher, who mispends it very often as much as the others, joins in the same cry, and authorises this impiety. Theophrastus thought it extremely hard to die at ninety, and to go out of the world when he had just learned how to live in it. His master Aristotle found fault with nature, for treating man in this respect worse than several other animals: both very unphilosophically! and I love Seneca the better for his quarrel with the Stagirite on this head. We see, in so many instances, a just proportion of things, according to their several relations to one another, that philosophy should lead us to conclude this proportion preserved, even where we cannot discern it; instead of leading us to conclude, that it is not preserved where we do not discern it, or where we think that we see the contrary. To conclude otherwise, is shocking presumption. It is to presume, that the system of the universe would have been more wisely contrived, if creatures of our low rank among intellectual natures had been called to the councils of the Most High; or that the Creator ought to mend this work by the advice of the creature. That life which seems to our self-love so short, when we compare it with the ideas we frame of eternity, or even with the duration of some other beings, will appear sufficient, upon a less partial view, to all the ends of our creation, and of a just proportion in the successive course of generations. The term itself is long: we render it short;

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and the want we complain of flows from our profusion not from our poverty. We are all arrant spendthrifts; some of us dissipate our estates on the trifles, some on the superfluities, and then we all complain that we want the necessaries, of life. The much greatest part never reclaim, but die bankrupts to God and man. Others reclaim late, and they are apt to imagine, when they make up their accounts, and see how their fund is diminished, that they have not enough remaining to live upon, because they have not the whole. But they deceive themselves: they were richer than they thought, and they are not yet poor. If they husband well the remainder, it will be found sufficient for all the necessaries, and for some of the superfluities, and trifles too perhaps, of life: but then the former order of expense must be inverted; and the necessaries of life must be provided, before they put themselves to any cost for the trifles or superfluities.

Let us leave the men of pleasure and of business, who are often candid enough to own, that they throw away their time, and thereby to confess that they complain of the Supreme Being for no other reason than this, that he has not proportioned his bounty to their extravagance: let us consider the scholar and the philosopher; who, far from owning that he throws any time away, reproves others for doing it; that solemn mortal, who abstains from the pleasures, and declines the business of the world, that he may dedicate his whole time to the search of truth, and the improvement

ment of knowledge. When such a one complains of the shortness of human life in general, or of his remaining share in particular; might not a man, more reasonable though less solemn, expostulate thus with him?

"Your complaint is indeed consistent with "your practice; but you would not, possibly, renew your complaint, if you reviewed your practice. Though reading makes a scholar; yet "every scholar is not a philosopher, nor every "philosopher a wise man. It cost you twenty "years to devour all the volumes on one side of "your library: you came out a great critick in Latin and Greek, in the oriental tongues, in history "and chronology; but you was not satisfied: "you confessed that these were the "literæ nihil "sanantes;" and you wanted more time to acquire "other knowledge. You have had this time: "you have passed twenty years more on the "other side of your library, among philosophers, "rabbies, commentators, schoolmen, and whole "legions of modern doctors. You are extremely "well versed in all that has been written concerning the nature of God, and of the soul of man; "about matter and form, body and spirit; and "space, and eternal essences, and incorporeal "substances; and the rest of those profound speculations. You are a master of the controversies that have arisen about nature and grace, "about predestination and free will, and all the "other abstruse questions that have made so much "noise in the schools, and done so much hurt in

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" the world. You are going on, as fast as the in-
" firmities you have contracted will permit, in the
" same course of study; but you begin to foresee
" that you shall want time, and you make griev-
" ous complaints of the shortness of human life.
" Give me leave now to ask you, how many thou-
" sand years God must prolong your life, in order
" to reconcile you to his wisdom and goodness?
" It is plain, at least highly probable, that a life
" as long as that of the most aged of the pa-
" triarchs, would be too short to answer your pur-
" poses: since the researches and disputes, in which
" you are engaged, have been already for a much
" longer time the objects of learned inquiries,
" and remain still as imperfect and undetermined
" as they were at first. But let me ask you again,
" and deceive neither yourself nor me; have
" you, in the course of these forty years, once ex-
" amined the first principles, and the fundamen-
" tal facts, on which all those questions depend,
" with an absolute indifference of judgment, and
" with a scrupulous exactness? with the same
" that you have employed in examining the va-
" rious consequences drawn from them, and the
" heterodox opinions about them? Have you not
" taken them for granted, in the whole course of
" your studies? or, if you have looked now and
" then on the state of the proofs brought to main-
" tain them, have you not done it as a mathema-
" tician looks over a demonstration formerly
" made, to refresh his memory, not to satisfy
" any doubt? If you have thus examined, it may

" appear marvellous to some, that you have spent
" so much time in many parts of those studies,
" which have reduced you to this hectick condition,
" of so much heat and weakness. But if you
" have not thus examined, it must be evident to
" all, nay to yourself on the least cool reflection,
" that you are still, notwithstanding all your learn-
" ing, in a state of ignorance. For knowledge
" can alone produce knowledge: and without such
" an examination of axioms and facts, you can
" have none about inferences."

In this manner one might expostulate very reasonably with many a great scholar, many a profound philosopher, many a dogmatical casuist. And it serves to set the complaints about want of time, and the shortness of human life, in a very ridiculous but a true light. All men are taught their opinions, at least on the most important subjects, by rote; and are bred to defend them, with obstinacy. They may be taught true opinions; but whether true or false, the same zeal for them, and the same attachment to them, is every where inspired alike. The Tartar believes as heartily that the soul of Foe inhabits in his dairo, as the Christian believes the hypostatick union, or any article in the Athanasian creed. Now this may answer the ends of society in some respects, and do well enough for the vulgar of all ranks: but it is not enough for the man who cultivates his reason, who is able to think, and who ought to think, for himself. To such a man, every opinion that he has not himself either framed, or examined strictly and then adopted,

adopted, will pass for nothing more than what it really is, the opinion of other men; which may be true or false for aught he knows. And this is a state of uncertainty, in which no such man can remain, with any peace of mind, concerning those things that are of greatest importance to us here, and may be so hereafter. He will make them therefore the objects of his first and greatest attention. If he has lost time, he will lose no more; and when he has acquired all the knowledge he is capable of acquiring on these subjects, he will be the less concerned whether he has time to acquire any farther. Should he have passed his life in the pleasures or business of the world; whenever he sets about this work, he will soon have the advantage over the learned philosopher. For he will soon have secured what is necessary to his happiness, and may sit down in the peaceful enjoyment of that knowledge: or proceed with greater advantage and satisfaction to the acquisition of new knowledge: while the other continues his search after things that are in their nature, to say the best of them, hypothetical, precarious, and superfluous.

But this is not the only rule, by observing of which we may redeem our time, and have the advantage over those who imagine they have so much in point of knowledge over your lordship or me, for instance, and who despise our ignorance. The rule I mean is this; to be on our guard against the common arts of delusion, spoken of already; which, every one is ready to confess, have been employed to mislead those who differ from him.

Let us be diffident of ourselves, but let us be diffident of others too: our own passions may lead us to reason wrong; but the passions and interest of others may have the same effect. It is in every man's power, who sets about it in good earnest, to prevent the first: and when he has done so, he will have a conscious certainty of it. To prevent the last, there is one, and but one sure method; and that is, to remount, in the survey of our opinions, to the first and even remotest principles on which they are founded. No respect, no habit, no seeming certainty whatever, must divert us from this; any affectation of diverting us from it ought to increase our suspicion: and the more important our examination is, the more important this method of conducting it becomes. Let us not be frighted from it, either by the supposed difficulty or length of such an inquiry; for, on the contrary, this is the easiest and the shortest, as well as the only sure way of arriving at real knowledge; and of being able to place the opinions we examine in the different classes of true, probable, or false, according to the truth, probability, or falshood of the principles from whence they are deduced. If we find these principles false, and that will be the case in many instances, we stop our inquiries on these heads at once; and save an immense deal of time that we should otherwise mispend. The Mussulman, who enters on the examination of all the disputes that have arisen between the followers of Omar and Ali and other doctors of his law, must acquire a thorough knowledge of the whole Mahometan system; and

and will have as good a right to complain of want of time, and the shortness of human life, as any Pagan or Christian divine or philosopher: but without all this time and learning, he might have discovered that Mahomet was an impostor, and that the Koran is a heap of absurdities.

In short, my lord, he who retires from the world, with a resolution of employing his leisure, in the first place to reexamine and settle his opinions, is inexcusable if he does not begin with those that are most important to him, and if he does not deal honestly by himself. To deal honestly by himself, he must observe the rule I have insisted upon, and not suffer the delusions of the world to follow him into his retreat. Every man's reason is every man's oracle: this oracle is best consulted in the silence of retirement; and when we have so consulted, whatever the decision be, whether in favour of our prejudices or against them, we must rest satisfied: since nothing can be more certain than this, that he who follows that guide in the search of truth, as that was given him to lead him to it, will have a much better plea to make, whenever or wherever he may be called to account, than he, who has resigned himself, either deliberately or inadvertently, to any authority upon Earth.

When we have done this, concerning God, ourselves, and other men; concerning the relations in which we stand to him and to them; the duties that result from these relations; and the positive will of the Supreme Being, whether revealed to us in a supernatural, or discovered by

the right use of our reason in a natural way——we have done the great business of our lives. Our lives are so sufficient for this, that they afford us time for more, even when we begin late: especially if we proceed in every other inquiry by the same rule. To discover errour in axioms, or in first principles grounded on facts, is like the breaking of a charm. The enchanted castle, the steepy rock, the burning lake disappear: and the paths that lead to truth, which we imagined to be so long, so embarrassed, and so difficult, show as they are, short, open, and easy. When we have secured the necessaries, there may be time to amuse ourselves with the superfluities, and even with the trifles of life. "Dulce est desipere;" said Horace: "Vive la bagatelle!" says Swift. I oppose neither; not the Epicurean, much less the Christian philosopher, but I insist that a principal part of these amusements be the amusements of study and reflection, of reading and converfation. You know what conversation I mean; for we lose the true advantage of our nature and constitution, if we suffer the mind to come, as it were, to a stand. When the body, instead of acquiring new vigour, and tasting new pleasures, begins to decline, and is sated with pleasures, or grown incapable of taking them, the mind may continue still to improve and indulge itself in new enjoyments. Every advance in knowledge opens a new scene of delight; and the joy that we feel in the actual possession of one, will be heightened by that which we expect

to

to find in another: so that, before we can exhaust this fund of successive pleasures, death will come to end our pleasures and our pains at once. "In "his studiis laboribusque viventi, non intelligitur "quando obrepit senectus: ita sensim sine sen- "su ætas senescit, nec subito frangitur, sed diu- "turnitate extinguitur."

This, my lord, is the wisest, and the most agreeable manner in which a man of sense can wind up the thread of life. Happy is he whose situation and circumstances give him the opportunity and means of doing it! Though he should not have made any great advances in knowledge, and should set about it late, yet the task will not be ound difficult, unless he has gone too far out of his way; and unless he continues too long to halt between the dissipations of the world and the leisure of a retired life:

——— Vivendi recte qui prorogat horam,
Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis,——

You know the rest. I am sensible, more sensible than any enemy I have, of my natural infirmities, and acquired disadvantages: but I have begun, and I will persist: for he who jogs forward on a battered horse, in the right way, may get to the end of his journey; which he cannot do, who gallops the fleetest courser of Newmarket out of it.

Adieu, my dear lord. Though I have much more to say on this subject, yet I perceive, and I doubt you have long perceived, that I have

said too much, at least for a letter, already. The rest shall be reserved for conversation whenever we meet: and then I hope to confirm, under your lordship's eye, my speculations by my practice. In the mean time let me refer you to our friend Pope. He says I made a philosopher of him: I am sure he has contributed very much, and I thank him for it, to the making a hermit of me.

A

LETTER

ON THE

SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM.

ON THE

SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM.

MY LORD, [Ld. Cornbury] 1736.*

YOU have engaged me on a subject, which interrupts the series of those letters I was writing to you: but it is one, which, I confess, I have very much at heart. I shall therefore explain myself fully, nor blush to reason on principles that are out of fashion among men, who intend nothing by serving the publick, but to feed their avarice, their vanity, and their luxury, without the sense of any duty they owe to God or man.

It seems to me, that in order to maintain the moral system of the world at a certain point, far below that of ideal perfection, for we are made capable of conceiving what we are incapable of attaining; but, however, sufficient upon the whole to constitute a state easy and happy, or at the worst tolerable: I say, it seems to me, that the Author of nature has thought fit to mingle, from time to time, among the societies of men, a few and but a few, of those on whom he is graciously pleased to bestow a larger proportion of the ethereal spirit, than is given in the ordinary course of his providence to the sons of men. These are they who engross almost the whole reason of the species: who are born to instruct, to guide, and to

* First published 1749. Bolingbroke's Advertisement severely reflecting on Pope for printing the piece is here omitted. It is in the

to preserve: who are designed to be the tutors and the guardians of humankind. When they prove such, they exhibit to us examples of the highest virtue, and the truest piety: and they deserve to have their festivals kept, instead of that pack of anachorites and enthusiasts, with whose names the kalendar is crowded and disgraced. When these men apply their talents to other purposes, when they strive to be great, and despise being good, they commit a most sacrilegious breach of trust; they pervert the means, they defeat, as far as lies in them, the designs of providence, and disturb, in some sort, the system of infinite wisdom. To misapply these talents is the most diffused, and, therefore, the greatest of crimes in it's nature and consequences; but to keep them unexerted, and unemployed, is a crime too. Look about you, my lord, from the palace to the cottage; you will find, that the bulk of mankind is made to breathe the air of this atmosphere; to roam about this globe, and to consume, like the courtiers of Alcinous, the fruits of the earth. Nos numerus sumus, et fruges consumere nati. When they have trod this insipid round a certain number of years, and begot others to do the same after them, they have lived: and if they have performed, in some tolerable degree, the ordinary moral duties of life, they have done all they were born to do. Look about you again, my lord, nay look into your own breast, and you will find that there are superiour spirits, men who show even from their infancy, though it be not always perceived

perceived by others, perhaps not always felt by themselves, that they were born for something more and better. These are the men to whom the part I mentioned is assigned. Their talents denote their general designation: and the opportunities of conforming themselves to it, that arise in the course of things, or that are presented to them by any circumstances of rank and situation in the society to which they belong, denote the particular vocation, which it is not lawful for them to resist, nor even to neglect. The duration of the lives of such men as these is to be determined, I think, by the length and importance of the parts they act, not by the number of years that pass between their coming into the world, and their going out of it. Whether the piece be of three, or five acts, the part may be long: and he, who sustains it through the whole, may be said to die in the fullness of years; while he, who declines it sooner, may be said not to live out half his days.

I have sometimes represented to myself the vulgar, who are accidentally distinguished by the titles of king and subject, of lord and vassal, of nobleman and peasant; and the few, who are distinguished by nature so essentially from the herd of mankind, that, figure apart, they seem to be of another species, in this manner: the former come into the world, and continue in it, like German travellers in a foreign country. Every thing they meet has the grace of novelty; and they are fond alike of every thing that is new. They wander about

about from one object to another, of vain curiosity, or inelegant pleasure. If they are industrious, they show their industry in copying signs, and collecting mottoes, and epitaphs. They loiter, or they trifle away their whole time; and their presence or their absence would be equally unperceived, if caprice or accident did not raise them often to stations, wherein their stupidity, their vices, or their follies, make them a publick misfortune. The latter come into the world, or at least continue in it after the effects of surprise and inexperience are over, like men who are sent on more important errands. They observe with distinction, they admire with knowledge. They may indulge themselves in pleasure; but as their industry is not employed about trifles, so their amusements are not made the business of their lives. Such men cannot pass unperceived through a country. If they retire from the world, their splendour accompanies them, and enlightens even the obscurity of their retreat. If they take a part in publick life, the effect is never indifferent. They either appear like ministers of divine vengeance, and their course through the world is marked by desolation and oppression, by poverty and servitude: or they are the guardian angels of the country they inhabit, busy to avert even the most distant evil, and to maintain or to procure peace, plenty, and, the greatest of human blessings, liberty.

From the observation, that superiority of parts is often employed to do superiour mischief, no consequence

sequence can be drawn against the truth I endeavour to establish. Reason collects the will of God from the constitution of things, in this as in other cases; but in no case does the divine power impel us necessarily to conform ourselves to this will, and therefore, from the misapplication of superiour parts to the hurt, no argument can be drawn against this position, that they were given for the good, of mankind. Reason deceives us not: we deceive ourselves, and suffer our wills to be determined by other motives. Montagne or Charron would say, l'homme se pipe, "man is at once "his own sharper, and his own bubble." Human nature is her own bawd, says Tully, blanda conciliatrix, et quasi lena sui. He who considers the universal wants, imperfections, and vices of his kind, must agree that men were intended not only for society, but to unite in commonwealths, and to submit to laws: legum idcirco omnes servi sumus, ut liberi esse possimus. And yet this very man will be seduced by his own passions, or the passions and examples of others, to think, or to act as if he thought, the very contrary. So he who is conscious of superiour endowments, such as render him more capable, than the generality of men, to secure and improve the advantages of social life, by preserving the commonwealth in strength and splendour, even he may be seduced to think, or to act as if he thought, that these endowments were given him for the gratification of his ambition, and his other passions; and that there is no difference between vice and virtue,

between

between a knave and an honest man, but one, which a prince, who died not many years ago, asserted; "that men of great sense were, therefore, knaves, "and men of little sense were, therefore, honest." But in neither of these cases will the truth and reason of things be altered by such examples of human frailty. It will be still true, and reason will still demonstrate, that all men are directed, by the general constitution of human nature, to submit to government, and that some men are in a particular manner designed to take care of that government, on which the common happiness depends. The use that reason will make of such examples will be only this, that since men are so apt, in every form of life and every degree of understanding, to act against their interest and their duty too, without benevolence to mankind, or regard to the divine will; it is the more incumbent on those who have this benevolence and this regard at heart, to employ all the means that the nature of the government allows, and that rank, circumstances of situation, or superiority of talents, give them, to oppose evil, and promote good government; and contribute thus to preserve the moral system of the world at that point of perfection at least, which seems to have been prescribed to it by the great Creator of every system of beings.

Give me leave, now, my lord, to cast my eyes for a moment homeward, and to apply what I have been saying to the present state of Britain. That there is no profusion of the ethereal spirit

to

to be observed among us, and that we do not abound with men of superiour genius, I am ready to confess; but I think there is no ground for the complaints I have heard made, as if nature had not done her part in our age, as well as in former ages, by producing men capable of serving the commonwealth. The manners of our forefathers were, I believe, in many respects better: they had more probity perhaps, they had certainly more show of honour, and greater industry. But still nature sows alike, though we do not reap alike. There are, and as there always have been, there always will be such creatures in government as I have described above. Fortune maintains a kind of rivalship with wisdom, and piques herself often in favour of fools as well as knaves. Socrates used to say, that although no man undertakes a trade he has not learned, even the meanest; yet every one thinks himself sufficiently qualified for the hardest of all trades, that of government. He said this upon the experience he had in Greece. He would not change his opinion if he lived now in Britain. But however, such characters as these would do little hurt, generally speaking, or would not do it long, if they stood alone. To do great hurt, some genius, some knowledge, some talents in short, natural or acquired, are necessary: less indeed, far less than are required to do good, but always some. Yet, I imagine, not the worst minister could do all the mischief he does, by the misapplication of his talents alone, if it were not for the

misapplication of much better talents than his, by some who join with him, and the non-application, or the faint and unsteady exercise of their talents, by some who oppose him; as well as the general remissness of mankind in acquiring knowledge, and improving the parts which God has given them, for the service of the publick. These are the great springs of national misfortunes. There have been monsters in other ages, and other countries, as well as ours; but they never continued their devastations long, when there were heroes to oppose them. We will suppose a man imprudent, rash, presumptuous, ungracious, insolent, and profligate in speculation as well as practice. He can bribe, but he cannot seduce: he can buy, but he cannot gain: he can lye, but he cannot deceive. From whence then has such a man his strength? from the general corruption of the people, nursed up to a full maturity under his administration; from the venality of all orders and all ranks of men, some of whom are so prostitute, that they set themselves to sale, and even prevent application. This would be the answer, and it would be a true one as far as it goes; but it does not account for the whole. Corruption could not spread with so much success, though reduced into system, and though some ministers, with equal impudence and folly, avowed it, by themselves and their advocates, to be the principal expedient by which they governed, if a long and almost unobserved progression of causes and effects did

not prepare the conjuncture. Let me explain it and apply it, as I conceive it. One party had given their whole attention, during several years, to the project of enriching themselves, and impoverishing the rest of the nation, and, by these and other means, of establishing their dominion under the government, and with the favour of a family, who were foreigners, and therefore might believe, that they were established on the throne by the good-will and strength of this party alone. This party in general were so intent on these views, and many of them, I fear, are so still, that they did not advert in time to the necessary consequences of the measures they abetted: nor did they consider, that the power they raised, and by which they hoped to govern their country, would govern them with the very rod of iron they forged, and would be the power of a prince or minister, not that of a party long. Another party continued sour, sullen, and inactive, with judgments so weak, and passions so strong, that even experience, and a severe one surely, was lost upon them. They waited, like the Jews, for a Messiah that may never come; and under whom, if he did come, they would be strangely disappointed in their expectations of glory, and triumph, and universal dominion. While they waited, they were marked out like the Jews, a distinct race, hewers of wood and drawers of water, scarce members of the community, though born in the country. All indifferent men stood as it were at a gaze;

and the few who were jealous of the court, were still more jealous of one another; so that a strength sufficient to oppose bad ministers was not easy to be formed. When this strength was formed, and the insufficiency or iniquity of the administration was daily exposed to publick view, many adhered at first to the minister, and others were since gained to his cause, because they knew nothing of the constitution of their own, nor of the history of other countries; but imagined wildly, that things always went as they saw them go, and that liberty has been, and therefore may be, preserved, under the influence of the same corruption. Others perhaps were weak enough to be frightened at first, as some are hypocritical enough to pretend to be still, with the appellations of Tory and Jacobite, which are always ridiculously given to every man, who does not bow to the brazen image that the king has set up. Others again might be persuaded, that no fatal use at least would be made of the power acquired by corruption: and men of superiour parts might and may still flatter themselves, that if this power should be so employed, they shall have time and means to stop the effects of it. The first of these are seduced by their ignorance and futility; the second, if they are not hypocrites, by their prejudices; the third, by their partiality and blind confidence; the last by their presumption; and all of them by the mammon of unrighteousness, their private interest, which they endeavour to palliate and to reconcile

reconcile as well as they can to that of the publick: et cæca cupiditate corrupti, non intelligunt se, dum vendunt, et veniere.

According to this representation, which I take to be true, your lordship will agree that our unfortunate country affords an example in proof of what is asserted above. The German travellers I spoke of, men of the ordinary or below the ordinary size of understanding, though they are called by caprice, or lifted any other way into power, cannot do great and long mischief in a country of liberty; unless men of genius, knowledge, and experience, misapply these talents, and become their leaders. A ministerial faction would have as little ability to do hurt, as they have inclination to do good, if they were not formed and conducted by one of better parts than they; nor would such a minister be able to support, at the head of this trusty phalanx, the ignominious tyranny imposed on his country, if other men, of better parts and much more consequence than himself, were not drawn in to misapply these parts to the vilest drudgery imaginable; the daily drudgery of explaining nonsense, covering ignorance, disguising folly, concealing and even justifying fraud and corruption: instead of employing their knowledge, their elocution, their skill, experience, and authority, to correct the administration and to guard the constitution. But this is not all: the example shows a great deal more. Your lordship's experience, as well as mine, will justify what I am going to

say. It shows further, that such a conjuncture could not be rendered effectual to preserve power in some of the weakest and some of the worst hands in the kingdom, if there was not a non-application, or a faint and unsteady exercise of parts on one side, as well as an iniquitous misapplication of them on the other: and I cannot help saying, let it fall where it will, what I have said perhaps already, that the former is a crime but one degree inferiour to the latter. The more genius, industry, and spirit are employed to destroy, the harder the task of saving our country becomes; but the duty increases with the difficulty, if the principles on which I reason are true. In such exigencies it is not enough, that genius be opposed to genius; spirit must be matched by spirit. They, who go about to destroy, are animated from the first by ambition and avarice, the love of power and of money: fear makes them often desperate at last. They must be opposed, therefore, or they will be opposed in vain, by a spirit able to cope with ambition, avarice, and despair itself; by a spirit able to cope with these passions, when they are favoured and fortified by the weakness of a nation, and the strength of a government. In such exigencies there is little difference, as to the merit or the effect, between opposing faintly and unsteadily, and not opposing at all: nay the former may be of worse consequence, in certain circumstances, than the latter. And this is a truth I wish with all my heart you may not see verified

verified in our country, where many, I fear, undertake opposition not as a duty, but as an adventure: and looking on themselves like volunteers, not like men listed in the service, they deem themselves at liberty to take as much or as little of this trouble, and to continue in it as long, or end it as soon, as they please. It is but a few years ago, that not the merchants alone, but the whole nation took fire at the project of new excises. The project was opposed not on mercantile considerations and interests alone, but on the true principles of liberty. In parliament, the opposition was strenuously enough supported for a time; but there was so little disposition to guide and improve the spirit, that the chief concern of those who took the lead seemed applied to keep it down: and yet your lordship remembers how high it continued against the projector, till it was calmed just before the elections of the present parliament, by the remarkable indolence and inactivity of the last session of the last. But these friends of ours, my lord, are as much mistaken in their ethicks, as the event will show they have been in their politicks.

The service of our country is no chimerical, but a real duty. He who admits the proofs of any other moral duty, drawn from the constitution of human nature, or from the moral fitness and unfitness of things, must admit them in favour of this duty, or be reduced to the most absurd inconsistency. When he

has once admitted the duty on these proofs, it will be no difficult matter to demonstrate to him, that his obligation to the performance of it is in proportion to the means and the opportunities he has of performing it; and that nothing can discharge him from this obligation as long as he has these means and these opportunities in his power, and as long as his country continues in the same want of his services. These obligations, then, to the publick service may become obligations for life on certain persons. No doubt they may: and shall this consideration become a reason for denying or evading them? On the contrary, sure it should become a reason for acknowledging and fulfilling them, with the greatest gratitude to the Supreme Being, who has made us capable of acting so excellent a part, and with the utmost benevolence to mankind. Superiour talents, and superiour rank among our fellow-creatures, whether acquired by birth, or by the course of accidents, and the success of our own industry, are noble prerogatives. Shall he, who possesses them, repine at the obligation they lay him under of passing his whole life in the noblest occupation of which human nature is capable? To what higher station, to what greater glory can any mortal aspire, than to be, during the whole course of his life, the support of good, the control of bad government, and the guardian of publick liberty? To be driven from hence by successful tyranny, by loss of health or of parts,

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or by the force of accidents, is to be degraded in such a manner as to deserve pity, and not to incur blame; but to degrade ourselves, to descend voluntarily, and by choice, from the highest to a lower, perhaps to the lowest rank among the sons of Adam; to abandon the government of men for that of hounds and horses, the care of a kingdom for that of a parish, and a scene of great and generous efforts in publick life, for one of trifling amusements and low cares, of sloth of idleness, what is it, my lord? I had rather your lordship should name it than I. Will it be said, that it is hard to exact from some men, in favour of others, that they should renounce all the pleasures of life, and drudge all their days in business, that others may indulge themselves in ease? it will be said without grounds. A life dedicated to the service of our country admits the full use, and no life should admit the abuse of pleasures: the least are consistent with a constant discharge of our publick duty, the greatest arise from it. The common, the sensual pleasures to which nature prompts us, and which reason therefore does not forbid, though she should always direct, are so far from being excluded out of a life of business, that they are sometimes necessary in it, and are always heightened by it: those, of the table, for instance, may be ordered so as to promote that which the elder Cato calls vitæ conjunctionem. In the midst of publick duties, private studies, and an extreme old age, he found time to frequent the sodalitates, or clubs of friends, at Rome, and to sit up all night with his

his neighbours in the country of the Sabines. Cato's virtue often glowed with wine: and the love of women did not hinder Cæsar from forming and executing the greatest projects, that ambition ever suggested. But if Cæsar, while he laboured to destroy the liberties of his country, enjoyed these inferiour pleasures of life, which a man who labours to save those liberties may enjoy as well as he; there are superiour pleasures in a busy life, that Cæsar never knew; those, I mean, that arise from a faithful discharge of our duty to the commonwealth. Neither Montagne in writing his essays, nor Des Cartes in building new worlds, nor Burnet in framing an antediluvian Earth, no, nor Newton in discovering and establishing the true laws of nature on experiment and a sublimer geometry, felt more intellectual joys, than he feels who is a real patriot, who bends all the force of his understanding, and directs all his thoughts and actions to the good of his country. When such a man forms a political scheme, and adjusts various and seemingly independent parts in it to one great and good design, he is transported by imagination, or absorbed in meditation, as much and as agreeably as they: and the satisfaction, that arises from the different importance of these objects in every step of the work, is vastly in his favour. It is here that the speculative philosopher's labour and pleasure end. But he who speculates in order to act, goes on and carries his scheme into execution. His labour continues, it varies, it increases; but so does his

his pleasure too. The execution indeed is often traversed, by unforeseen and untoward circumstances, by the perverseness or treachery of friends, and by the power or malice of enemies: but the first and the last of these animate, and the docility and fidelity of some men make amends for the perverseness and treachery of others. While a great event is in suspense, the action warms, and the very suspense, made up of hope and fear, maintain no unpleasing agitation in the mind. If the event is decided successfully, such a man enjoys pleasure proportionable to the good he has done; a pleasure like to that which is attributed to the Supreme Being, on a survey of his works. If the event is decided otherwise, and usurping courts, or overbearing parties prevail; such a man has still the testimony of his conscience, and a sense of the honour he has acquired, to soothe his mind, and support his courage. For although the course of state affairs be to those who meddle in them like a lottery, yet it is a lottery wherein no good man can be a loser: he may be reviled, it is true, instead of being applauded, and may suffer violence of many kinds. I will not say, like Seneca, that the noblest spectacle, which God can behold, is a virtuous man suffering, and struggling with afflictions: but this I will say, that the second Cato, driven out of the forum, and dragged to prison, enjoyed more inward pleasure, and maintained more outward dignity, than they who insulted him, and who triumphed in the ruin

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of their country. But the very example of Cato may be urged, perhaps, against what I have insisted upon: it may be asked, what good he did Rome, by dedicating his whole life to her service; what honour to himself, by dying at Utica. It may be said, that governments have their periods, like all things human; that they may be brought back to their primitive principles during a certain time, but that when these principles are worn out in the minds of men, it is a vain enterprise to endeavour to renew them; that this is the case of all governments when the corruption of the people comes to a great pitch, and is grown universal: that when a house which is old and quite decayed, though often repaired, not only cracks, but totters even from the foundations, every man in his senses runs out of it, and takes shelter where he can, and that none but madmen continue obstinate to repair what is irreparable, till they are crushed in the ruin; just so, that we must content ourselves to live under the government we like the least, when that form which we like the most is destroyed or worn out, according to the counsel of Dolabella in one of his letters to Cicero. But, my lord, if Cato could not save, he prolonged the life of liberty: the liberties of Rome would have been lost when Catiline attacked them, abetted probably by Cæsar and Crassus, and the worst citizens of Rome; and when Cicero defended them, abetted by Cato and the best. That Cato erred in his conduct,

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by giving way too much to the natural roughness of his temper, and by allowing too little for that of the Romans, among whom luxury had long prevailed, and corruption was openly practised, is most true. He was incapable of employing those seeming compliances, that are reconcilable to the greatest steadiness; and treated unskilfully a crazy constitution. The safety of the commonwealth depended, in that critical conjuncture, on a coalition of parties, the senatorian and the equestrian: Tully had formed it, Cato broke it. But if this good, for I think he was not an able, man erred in the particular respects I have ventured to mention, he deserved most certainly the glory he acquired by the general tenour of his conduct, and by dedicating the whole labour of his life to the service of his country. He would have deserved more, if he had persisted in maintaining the same cause to the end, and would have died, I think, with a better grace at Munda than at Utica. If this be so, if Cato may be censured, severely indeed, but justly, for abandoning the cause of liberty, which he would not, however, survive; what shall we say of those who embrace it faintly, pursue it irresolutely, grow tired of it when they have much to hope, and give it up when they have nothing to fear?

My lord, I have insisted the more on this duty which men owe to their country, because I came out of England, and continue still, strongly affected with what I saw when I was there. Our government

vernment has approached nearer, than ever before, to the true principles of it, since the revolution of one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight: and the accession of the present family to the throne has given the fairest opportunities, as well as the justest reasons, for completing the scheme of liberty, and improving it to perfection. But it seems to me, that in our separate world, as the means of asserting and supporting liberty are increased, all concern for it is diminished. I beheld, when I was among you, more abject servility, in the manners and behaviour of particular men, than I ever saw in France, or than has been seen there, I believe, since the days of that Gascon, who, being turned out of the minister's door, leaped in again at his window. As to bodies of men, I dare challenge your lordship, and I am sorry for it, to produce any instances of resistance to the unjust demands, or wanton will of a court, that British parliaments have given, comparable to such as I am able to cite to the honour of the parliament of Paris, and the whole body of the law in that country, within the same compass of time. This abject servility may appear justly the more wonderful in Britain, because the government of Britain has, in some sort, the appearance of an oligarchy: and monarchy is rather hid behind it than shown, rather weakened than strengthened, rather imposed upon than obeyed. The wonder therefore is to observe, how imagination and custom, a giddy fool and a formal pedant, have rendered these cabals, or oligarchies, more respected

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than majesty itself. That this should happen in countries where princes, who have absolute power, may be tyrants themselves, or substitute subordinate tyrants, is not wonderful. It has happened often: but that it should happen in Britain, may be justly an object of wonder. In these countries, the people had lost the armour of their constitution: they were naked and defenceless. Ours is more complete than ever. But though we have preserved the armour, we have lost the spirit, of our constitution: and therefore we bear, from little engrossers of delegated power, what our fathers would not have suffered from true proprietors of the royal authority. Parliaments are not only, what they always were, essential parts of our constitution, but essential parts of our administration too. They do not claim the executive power: no; but the executive power cannot be exercised without their annual concurrence. How few months, instead of years, have princes and ministers now to pass, without inspection and control! How easy, therefore, is it become to check every growing evil in the bud; to change every bad administration, to keep such farmers of government in awe; to maintain, and revenge, if need be, the constitution! It is become so easy, by the present form of our government, that corruption alone could not destroy us. We must want spirit, as well as virtue, to perish. Even able knaves would preserve liberty in such circumstances as ours, and highwaymen would scorn to receive the wages, and do the drudgery of pick-pockets. But all is little

little, and low, and mean among us! Far from having the virtues, we have not even the vices, of great men. He who had pride instead of vanity, and ambition but equal to his desire of wealth, could never bear, I do not say, to be the under-strapper to any farmer of royal authority, but to see patiently one of them, at best his fellow, perhaps his inferiour in every respect, lord it over him, and the rest of mankind, dissipating the wealth, and trampling on the liberties of his country, with impunity. This could not happen, if there was the least spirit among us. But there is none. What passes among us for ambition, is an odd mixture of avarice and vanity: the moderation we have seen practised, is pusillanimity, and the philosophy that some men affect, is sloth. Hence it comes, that corruption has spread, and prevails.

I expect little from the principal actors, that tread the stage at present. They are divided, not so much as it has seemed, and as they would have it believed, about measures: the true division is about their different ends. While the minister was not hard pushed, nor the prospect of succeeding to him near, they appeared to have but one end, the reformation of the government. The destruction of the minister was pursued only as a preliminary, but of essential and indispensable necessity to that end. But when his destruction seemed to approach, the object of his succession interposed to the sight of many, and the reformation of the government was no longer their point of view. They divided the skin, at least

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in their thoughts, before they had taken the beast: and the common fear of hunting him down for others, made them all faint in the chace. It was this, and this alone, that has saved him, or has put off his evil day. Corruption, so much, and so justly complained of, could not have done it alone.

When I say that I expect little from the principal actors that tread the stage at present, I am far from applying to all of them what I take to be true of the far greatest part. There are men among them who certainly intend the good of their country, and whom I love and honour for that reason. But these men have been clogged, or misled, or overborne by others; and, seduced by natural temper to inactivity, have taken any excuse, or yielded to any pretence that favoured it. That they should rouse, therefore, in themselves, or in any one else, the spirit they have suffered, nay helped, to die away, I do not expect. I turn my eyes from the generation that is going off, to the generation that is coming on the stage. I expect good from them, and from none of them more than from you, my lord. Remember that the opposition, in which you have engaged at your first entrance into business, is not an opposition only to a bad administration of publick affairs, but to an administration that supports itself by means, establishes principles, introduces customs, repugnant to the constitution of our government, and destructive of all liberty; that you do not only combat present evils, but

attempts to entail these evils upon you and your posterity; that if you cease the combat, you give up the cause; and that he, who does not renew, on every occasion, his claim, may forfeit his right.

Our disputes were formerly, to say the truth, much more about persons than things; or, at most, about particular points of political conduct, in which we should have soon agreed, if persons and personal interests had been less concerned, and the blind prejudice of party less prevalent. Whether the Big-endians, or the Little-endians got the better, I believe, no man of sense and knowledge thought the constitution concerned; notwithstanding all the clamour raised at one time about the danger of the church, and at another time about the danger of the protestant succession. But the case is, at this time, vastly altered. The means of invading liberty more effectually by the constitution of the revenue, than it ever had been invaded by prerogative, were not then grown up into strength. They are so now: and a bold and an insolent use is made of them. To reform the state, therefore, is, and ought to be, the object of your opposition, as well as to reform the administration. Why do I say as well? It is so, and it ought to be so, much more. Wrest the power of the government, if you can, out of hands that have employed it weakly and wickedly, ever since it was thrown into them by a silly bargain made in one reign, and a corrupt bargain made in another. But do not imagine this to be

you sole, or your principal, business. You owe to your country, to your honour, to your security, to the present, and to future ages, that no endeavours of yours be wanting to repair the breach that is made, and is increasing daily in the constitution; and to shut up, with all the bars and bolts of law, the principal entries through which these torrents of corruption have been let in upon us. I say, the principal entries; because, however it may appear in pure speculation, I think it would not be found in practice possible, no, nor eligible neither, to shut them up all. As entries of corruption none of them deserve to be excepted; but there is a just distinction to be made, because there is a real difference. Some of these entries are opened by the abuse of powers necessary to maintain subordination and to carry on even good government, and therefore necessary to be preserved in the crown, notwithstanding the abuse that is sometimes made of them; for no human institution can arrive at perfection, and the most that human wisdom can do, is to procure the same or greater good, at the expense of less evil. There will be always some evil, either immediate or remote, either in cause or consequence. But there are other entries of corruption, and these are by much the greatest, for suffering of which to continue open, no reason can be assigned, or has been pretended to be assigned, but that which is, to every honest and wise man, a reason for shutting them up; the increase of the means of corruption, which are oftener employed for the service of the oligarchy,

than for the service of the monarchy. Shut up these, and you will have nothing to fear from the others. By these a more real and a more dangerous power has been granted to ministers, than was lost to the crown by the restraints on prerogative.

There have been periods when our government continued free, with strong appearances of becoming absolute. Let it be your glory, my lord, and that of the new generation springing up with you, that this government do not become absolute at any future period, with the appearances of being free. However you may be employed, in all your counsels, in all your actions, keep this regard to the constitution always in sight. The scene that opens before you is great, and the part that you will have to act, difficult. It is difficult, indeed, to bring men, from strong habits of corruption, to prefer honour to profit, and liberty to luxury; as it is hard to teach princes the great art of governing all by all, or to prevail on them to practise it. But if it be a difficult, it is a glorious attempt; an attempt, worthy to exert the greatest talents, and to fill the most extended life. Pursue it with courage, my lord, nor despair of success.

Deus hæc fortasse benigna
Reducet in sedem vice.

A parliament, nay, one house of parliament, is able at any time, and at once, to destroy any corrupt plan of power. Time produces every day new conjunctures. Be prepared to improve them.

We

We read, in the Old Testament, of a city that might have escaped divine vengeance, if five righteous men had been found in it. Let not our city perish for want of so small a number: and if the generation that is going off could not furnish it, let the generation that is coming on furnish a greater.

We may reasonably hope that it will, from the first essays which your lordship and some others of our young senators have made in publick life. You have raised the hopes of your country by the proofs you have given of superiour parts. Confirm these hopes by proofs of uncommon industry, application, and perseverance. Superiour parts, nay, even superiour virtue, without these qualities, will be insufficient to support your character and your cause. How many men have appeared in my time, who have made these essays with success, and have made no progress afterward? Some have dropped, from their first flights, down into the vulgar crowd, have been distinguished, nay, heard of no more! others, with better parts, perhaps with more presumption, but certainly with greater ridicule, have persisted in making these essay toward business all their lives, and have never been able to advance farther, in their political course, than a premeditated harangue on some choice subject. I never saw one of these important persons sit down after his oration, with repeated hear-hims ringing in his ears, and inward rapture glowing in his eyes, that he did not recal to my memory the story of a conceited

ceited member of some parliament in France, who was over heard, after his tedious harangue, muttering most devoutly to himself, Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam!

Eloquence has charms to lead mankind, and gives a nobler superiority than power, that every dunce may use, or fraud, that every knave may employ. But eloquence must flow like a stream that is fed by an abundant spring, and not spout forth like a frothy water on some gaudy day, and remain dry the rest of the year. The famous orators of Greece and Rome were the statesmen and ministers of those commonwealths. The nature of their governments, and the humour of those ages, made elaborate orations necessary. They harangued oftener than they debated: and the ars dicendi required more study and more exercise of mind, and of body too, among them, than are necessary among us. But as much pains as they took in learning how to conduct the stream of eloquence, they took more to enlarge the fountain from which it flowed. Hear Demosthenes, hear Cicero, thunder against Philip, Catiline, and Antony. I choose the example of the first, rather than that of Pericles, whom he imitated, or of Phocion, whom he opposed, or of any other considerable personage in Greece: and the example of Cicero rather than that of Crassus, or of Hortensius, or of any other of the great men of Rome; because the eloquence of these two has been so celebrated, that we are accustomed to look upon them almost as mere orators. They

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were orators indeed, and no man who has a soul can read their orations, after the revolution of so many ages, after the extinction of the governments, and of the people for whom they were composed, without feeling, at this hour, the passions they were designed to move, and the spirit they were designed to raise. But if we look into the history of these two men, and consider the parts they acted, we shall see them in another light, and admire them in a higher sphere of action. Demosthenes had been neglected, in his education, by the same tutors who cheated him of his inheritance. Cicero was bred with greater advantage: and Plutarch, I think, says, that when he first appeared, the people used to call him, by way of derision, the Greek, and the scholar. But whatever advantage of this kind the latter might have over the former, and to which of them soever you ascribe the superiour genius, the progress which both of them made in every part of political knowledge, by their industry and application, was marvellous. Cicero might be a better philosopher, but Demosthenes was no leſs a statesman: and both of them performed actions, and acquired fame, above the reach of eloquence alone. Demosthenes used to compare eloquence to a weapon, aptly enough; for eloquence, like every other weapon, is of little use to the owner, unless he have the force and the skill to use it. This force and this skill Demosthenes had in an eminent degree. Observe them in one instance among many. It was of mighty importance to Philip,

to prevent the accession of Thebes to the grand alliance that Demosthenes, at the head of the Athenian commonwealth, formed against the growing power of the Macedonians. Philip had emissaries and his ambassadors on the spot, to oppose to those of Athens, and we may be assured that he neglected none of those arts upon this occasion, that he employed so successfully on others. The struggle was great, but Demosthenes prevailed, and the Thebans engaged in the war against Philip. Was it by his eloquence alone that he prevailed, in a divided state, over all the subtilty of intrigue, all the dexterity of negotiation, all the seduction, all the corruption, and all the terrour, that the ablest and most powerful prince could employ? Was Demosthenes wholly taken up with composing orations, and haranguing the people in this remarkable crisis? He harangued them no doubt, at Thebes, as well as at Athens, and in the rest of Greece, where all the great resolutions of making alliances, waging war, or concluding peace, were determined in democratical assemblies. But yet haranguing was, no doubt, the least part of his business, and eloquence was neither the sole, nor the principal talent, as the style of writers would induce us to believe, on which his success depended. He must have been master of other arts, subserviently to which his eloquence was employed, and must have had a thorough knowledge of his own state, and of the other states of Greece, of their dispositions, and of their interests

rests relatively to one another, and relatively to their neighbours, to the Persians particularly, with whom he held a correspondence, not much to his honour in appearance, whatever he might intend by it: I say, he must have been master of many other arts, and have possessed an immense fund of knowledge, to make his eloquence in every case successful, and even pertinent or seasonable in some, as well as to direct it, and to furnish it with matter whenever he thought proper to employ this weapon.

Let us consider Tully on the greatest theatre of the known world, and in the most difficult circumstances. We are better acquainted with him than we are with Demosthenes; for we see him nearer, as it were, and in more different lights. How perfect a knowledge had he acquired of the Roman constitution of government, ecclesiastical and civil; of the original and progress, of the general reasons and particular occasions of the laws and customs of his country; of the great rules of equity, and the low practice of courts; of the duty of every magistracy and office in the state, from the dictator down to the lictor; and of all the steps by which Rome had risen, from her infancy, to liberty, to power, and grandeur, and dominion, as well as of all those by which she began to decline, a little before his age, to that servitude which he died for opposing, but lived to see established, and in which not her liberty alone, but her power, and grandeur, and dominion were lost! How well was he acquainted with

with the Roman colonies and provinces, with the allies and enemies of the empire, with the rights and privileges of the former, the dispositions and conditions of the latter, with the interests of them all relatively to Rome, and with the interests of Rome relatively to them! How present to his mind were the anecdotes of former times concerning the Roman and other states, and how curious was he to observe the minutest circumstances that passed in his own! His works will answer sufficiently the questions I ask, and establish in the mind of every man who reads them the idea I would give of his capacity and knowledge, as well as that which is so universally taken of his eloquence. To a man fraught with all this stock of knowledge, and industrious to improve it daily, nothing could happen that was entirely new, nothing for which he was quite unprepared, scarce any effect whereof he had not considered the cause, scarce any cause wherein his sagacity could not discern the latent effect. His eloquence in private causes gave him first credit at Rome: but it was this knowledge, this experience, and the continued habits of business, that supported his reputation, enabled him to do so much service to his country, and gave force and authority to his eloquence. To little purpose would he have attacked Catiline with all the vehemence that indignation, and even fear, added to eloquence, if he had trusted to this weapon alone. This weapon alone would have secured neither him nor the senate from the poniard of that assassin.

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He would have had no occasion to boast, that he had driven this infamous citizen out of the walls of Rome, abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit, if he had not made it, beforehand, impossible for him to continue any longer in them. As little occasion would he have had to assume the honour of defeating, without any tumult, or any disorder, the designs of those who conspired to murder the Roman people, to destroy the Roman empire, and to extinguish the Roman name; if he had not united, by skill and management, in the common cause of their country, orders of men the most averse to each other; if he had not watched all the machinations of the conspirators in silence, and prepared a strength sufficient to resist them at Rome, and in the provinces, before he opened this scene of villany to the senate and the people: in a word, if he had not made much more use of political prudence, that is, of the knowledge of mankind, and of the arts of government, which study and experience give, than of all the powers of his eloquence.

Such was Demosthenes, such was Cicero, such were all the great men whose memories are preserved in history, and such must every man be, or endeavour to be, if he has either sense or sentiment, who presumes to meddle in affairs of government, of a free government I mean, and hopes to maintain a distinguished character in popular assemblies, whatever part he takes, whether that of supporting, or that of opposing. I put the two cases purposely, my lord, because I have observed, and your lordship

ship will have frequent occasions of observing, many persons who seem to think that opposition to an administration requires fewer preparatives, and less constant application, than the conduct of it. Now, my lord, I take this to be a gross errour, and, I am sure, it has been a fatal one. It is one of those errours, and there are many such, which men impute to judgment, and which proceed from the defect of judgment, as this does from lightness, irresolution, laziness, and of a false notion of opposition; unless the persons, who seem to think, do not really think in this manner, but serving the publick purely for interest, and not for fame, nor for duty, decline taking the same pains when they oppose without personal and immediate reward, as they are willing to take when they are paid for serving. Look about you, and you will see men eager to speak, and keen to act, when particular occasions press them, or particular motives excite them, but quite unprepared for either: and hence all that superficiality in speaking, for want of information; hence all that confusion or inactivity, for want of concert; and all that disappointment, for want of preliminary measures. They who affect to head an opposition, or to make any considerable figure in it, must be equal, at least, to those whom they oppose; I do not say, in parts only, but in application and industry, and the fruits of both, information, knowledge, and a certain constant preparedness for all the events that may arise. Every administration is a system of conduct: opposition, therefore, should be a system

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of conduct likewise; an opposite, but not a dependent system. I shall explain myself better by an example. When two armies take the field, the generals on both sides have their different plans for the campaign, either of defence, or of offence: and as the former does not suspend his measures till he is attacked, but takes them beforehand on every probable contingency, so the latter does not suspend his till the opportunity of attacking presents itself, but is alert, and constantly ready to seize it whenever it happens; and in the mean time, is busy to improve all the advantages of skill, of force, or of any other kind that he has, or that he can acquire, independently of the plan, and of the motions of his enemy.

In a word, my lord, this is my notion, and I submit it to you. According to the present form of our constitution, every member of either house of parliament is a member of a national standing council, born, or appointed by the people, to promote good, and to oppose bad government: and if not vested with the power of a minister of state, yet vested with the superiour power of controlling those who are appointed such by the crown. It follows from hence, that they who engage in opposition are under as great obligations to prepare themselves to control, as they who serve the crown are under to prepare themselves to carry on the administration: and that a party formed for this purpose do not act like good citizens, nor honest men, unless they propose true, as well as oppose false measures of government. Sure I am, they do not act like wise men, unless they

they act systematically, and unless they contrast on every occasion that scheme of policy, which the publick interest requires to be followed, with that which is suited to no interest but the private interest of the prince, or his ministers. Cunning men (several such there are among you) will dislike this consequence, and object, that such a conduct would support, under the appearance of opposing, a weak, and even a wicked administration; and that to proceed in this manner would be to give good counsel to a bad minister, and to extricate him out of distresses, that ought to be improved to his ruin. But cunning pays no regard to virtue, and is but the low mimick of wisdom. It were easy to demonstrate what I have asserted concerning the duty of an opposing party: and I presume there is no need of labouring to prove, that a party who opposed, systematically, a wise to a silly, an honest to an iniquitous, scheme of government, would acquire greater reputation and strength, and arrive more surely at their end, than a party who opposed, occasionally as it were, without any common system, without any general concert, with little uniformity, little preparation, little perseverance, and as little knowledge or political capacity. But it is time to leave this invidious subject, and to hasten to the conclusion of my letter before it grows into a book.

I am

My lord, &c.

THE IDEA OF A PATRIOT KING.

[Note. The ms. of the next Piece – The Patriot King, was forwarded to Pope with request to have a few copies printed for private distribution. On Pope's death in May 1744 it was discovered that he had printed 1500 copies, which were stowed away. Bolingbroke got possession of them & committed them to the flames. It was the cause of deep indignation on the part of Bolingbroke against Warburton, Pope's literary Executor. It was finally published by Bolingbroke in 1749.]

THE

IDEA

OF A

PATRIOT KING.

INTRODUCTION.

Dec. 1. 1738.*

REVISING some letters I writ to my Lord ***, I found in one of them a great deal ſaid concerning the duties, which men owe to their country, those men particularly who live under a free constitution of government; with a strong application of these general doctrines to the present state of Great Britain, and to the characters of the present actors on this stage.

I saw no reason to alter, none even to soften, any thing that is there advanced. On the contrary, it came into my mind to carry these considerations further, and to delineate, for I pretend not to make a perfect draught, the duties of a king to his country; of those kings particularly who are appointed by the people, for I know of none who are anointed by God to rule in limited monarchies. After which, I proposed to apply the general doctrines in this case, as

 strongly

* Published 1749. Lord Cornbury is meant in the place of stars xxx Cooke assumes that this piece was written for the benefit of the Prince of Wale [illegible]

strongly and as directly as in the other, to the present state of Great Britain.

I am not one of those oriental slaves, who deem it unlawful presumption to look their kings in the face; neither am I swayed by my lord Bacon's authority, to think this custom good and reasonable in it's meaning, though it savours of barbarism in it's institution: Ritu quidem barbarus, sed significatione bonus. Much otherwise. It seems to me, that no secrets are so important to be known, no hearts deserve to be pried into with more curiosity and attention, than those of princes. But many things have concurred, beside age and temper, to set me at a great distance from the present court. Far from prying into the hearts, I scarce know the faces of our royal family. I shall therefore decline all application to their characters, and all mention of any influence which their characters may have on their own fortune, or on that of this nation.

The principles I have reasoned upon in my letter to my Lord ***, and those I shall reason upon here, are the same. They are laid in the same system of human nature. They are drawn from that source, from whence all the duties of publick and private morality muſt be derived, or they will be often falsely, and always precariously, established. Up to this source there are few men who take the pains to go: and, open as it lies, there are not many who can find their way to it. By such as do, I shall be understood and approved: and, far from fearing the censure,

quarrel with his father before his departure or
in France in 1735.

or the ridicule, I should reproach myself with the applause of men who measure their interest by their passions, and their duty by the examples of a corrupt age; that is, by the examples they afford to one another. Such, I think, are the greatest part of the present generation; not of the vulgar alone, but of those who stand foremost, and are raised highest in our nation. Such we may justly apprehend too that the next will be; since they who are to compose it will set out into the world under a direction, that must incline them strongly to the same course of self-interest, profligacy, and corruption.

The iniquity of all the principal men in any community, of kings and ministers especially, does not consist alone in the crimes they commit, and in the immediate consequences of these crimes: and therefore their guilt is not to be measured by these alone. Such men sin against posterity, as well as againſt their own age: and when the consequences of their crimes are over, the consequences of their example remain. I think, and every wise and honest man in generations yet unborn will think, if the history of this administration descends to blacken our annals, that the greatest iniquity of the minister, on whom the whole iniquity ought to be charged, since he has been so long in possession of the whole power, is the constant endeavour he has employed to corrupt the morals of men. I say thus generally, the morals; because he, who abandons or betrays his country, will abandon or betray his

friend: and because he, who is prevailed on to act in parliament without any regard to truth or justice, will easily prevail on himself to act in the same manner every where else. A wiser and honester administration may relieve our trade from that oppression, and the publick from that load of debt, under which it must be supposed that he has industriously kept it; because we are able to prove, by fair calculations, that he might have provided effectually for the payment of it, since he came to the head of the treasury. A wiser and honester administration may draw us back to our former credit and influence abroad, from that state of contempt into which we are sunk among all our neighbours. But will the minds of men, which this minister has narrowed to personal regards alone, will their views, which he has confined to the present moment, as if nations were mortal like the men who compose them, and Britain was to perish with her degenerate children: will these, I say, be so easily or so soon enlarged? Will their sentiments, which are debased from the love of liberty, from zeal for the honour and prosperity of their country, and from a desire of honest fame, to an absolute unconcernedness for all these, to an abject submission, and to a rapacious eagerness after wealth, that may sate their avarice, and exceed the profusion of their luxury; will these, I say again, be so easily, or so soon elevated? In a word, will the British spirit, that spirit which has preserved liberty hitherto in one corner of the world at least, be so easily or

so

soon reinfused into the British nation? I think not. We have been long coming to this point of depravation: and the progress from confirmed habits of evil is much more slow than the progress to them. Virtue is not placed on a rugged mountain of difficult and dangerous access, as they who would excuse the indolence of their temper, or the perverseness of their will, desire to have it believed; but she is seated, however, on an eminence. We may go up to her with ease, but we must go up gradually, according to the natural progression of reason, who is to lead the way and to guide our steps. On the other hand, if we fall from thence, we are sure to be hurried down the hill with a blind impetuosity, according to the natural violence of those appetites and passions that caused our fall at first, and urge it on the faster, the further they are removed from the control that before restrained them.

To perform, therefore, so great a work, as to reinfuse the spirit of liberty, to reform the morals, and to raise the sentiments of a people, much time is required; and a work, which requires so much time, may, too probably, be never completed; considering how unsteadily and unsystematically even the best of men are apt often to proceed, and how this reformation is to be carried forward, in opposition to publick fashion, and private inclination, to the authority of the men in power, and to the secret bent of many of those who are out of power. Let us not flatter our-

selves: I did so too long. It is more to be wished than to be hoped, that the contagion should spread no further than that leprous race, who carry on their skins, exposed to publick sight, the scabs and blotches of their distemper. The minister preaches corruption aloud and constantly, like an impudent missionary of vice: and some there are who not only insinuate, but teach the same occasionally. I say, some; because I am as far from thinking, that all those who join with him, as that any of those who oppose him, wait only to be more authorised, that they may propagate it with greater success, and apply it to their own use, in their turn.

It seems to me, upon the whole matter, that to save or redeem a nation, under such circumstances, from perdition, nothing less is necessary than some great, some extraordinary conjuncture of ill fortune, or of good, which may purge, yet so as by fire. Distress from abroad, bankruptcy at home, and other circumstances of like nature and tendency, may beget universal confusion. Out of confusion order may arise: but it may be the order of a wicked tyranny, instead of the order of a just monarchy. Either may happen: and such an alternative, at the disposition of fortune, is sufficient to make a Stoick tremble! We may be saved, indeed, by means of a very different kind; but these means will not offer themselves, this way of salvation will not be opened to us, without the concurrence, and

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the influence, of a Patriot King, the most uncommon of all phænomena in the physical or moral world.

Nothing can so surely and so effectually restore the virtue and publick spirit essential to the preservation of liberty and national prosperity, as the reign of such a prince.

We are willing to indulge this pleasing expectation, and there is nothing we desire more ardently, than to be able to hold of a British prince, without flattery, the same language that was held of a Roman emperor, with a great deal,

Nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes.

But let us not neglect, on our part, such means as are in our power, to keep the cause of truth, of reason, of virtue, and of liberty, alive. If the blessing be with-held from us, let us deserve, at least, that it should be granted to us. If Heaven, in mercy, bestows it on us, let us prepare to receive it, to improve it, and to cooperate with it.

I speak as if I could take my share in these glorious efforts. Neither shall I recal my words. Stripped of the rights of a British subject, of all except the meanest of them, that of inheriting, I remember, that I am a Briton still. I apply to myself what I have read in Seneca, Officia si civis amiserit, hominis exerceat. I have renounced the world, not in show, but in reality; and more by my way of thinking, than by my way of living, as retired as that may seem. But I have

not renounced my country, nor my friends: and by my friends I mean all those, and those alone, who are such to their country, by whatever name they have been, or may be still distinguished; and though in that number there should be men, of whose past ingratitude, injustice, or malice, I might complain, on my own account, with the greatest reason. These I will never renounce. In their prosperity, they shall never hear of me: in their distress, always. In that retreat, wherein the remainder of my days shall be spent, I may be of some use to them; since, even from thence, I may advise, exhort, and warn, them. "Nec enim is solus reipublicæ prodest, "qui candidatos extrahit, et tuetur reos, et de "pace, belloque censet; sed qui juventutem "exhortatur, qui, in tanta bonorum præcepto-"rum inopia, virtute instruit animos; qui ad "pecuniam luxuriamque cursu ruentes, prensat "ac retrahit, et, si nihil aliud, certe moratur; in "privato publicum negotium agit."

THE

IDEA

OF A

PATRIOT KING.

My intention is not to introduce what I have to say concerning the duties of kings, by any nice inquiry into the original of their institution. What is to be known of it will appear plainly enough, to such as are able and can spare time to trace it, in the broken traditions which are come down to us of a few nations. But those, who are not able to trace it there, may trace something better, and more worthy to be known, in their own thoughts: I mean what this institution ought to have been, whenever it began, according to the rule of reason, founded in the common rights and interests of mankind. On this head it is quite necessary to make some reflections, that will, like angular stones laid on a rock, support the little fabrick, the model however of a great building, that I propose to raise.

So plain a matter could never have been rendered intricate and voluminous, had it not been for lawless ambition, extravagant vanity, and the detestable spirit of tyranny, abetted by the private interests of artful men, by adulation and superstition

superstition, two vices to which that staring, timid creature man is excessively prone; if authority had not imposed on such as did not pretend to reason: and if such as did attempt to reason had not been caught in the common snares of sophism, and bewildered in the labyrinths of disputation. In this case, therefore, as in all those of great concernment, the shortest and the surest method of arriving at real knowledge is to unlearn the lessons we have been taught, to remount to first principles, and take nobody's word about them: for it is about them that almost all the juggling and legerdemain, employed by men whose trade it is to deceive, are set to work.

Now he, who does so in this case, will discover soon, that the notions concerning the divine institution and right of kings, as well as the absolute power belonging to their office, have no foundation in fact or reason, but have risen from an old alliance between ecclesiastical and civil policy. The characters of king and priest have been sometimes blended together: and when they have been divided, as kings have found the great effects wrought in government by the empire which priests obtain over the consciences of mankind, so priests have been taught by experience, that the best method to preserve their own rank, dignity, wealth, and power, all raised upon a supposed divine right, is to communicate the same pretention to kings, and, by a fallacy common to both, impose their usurpations on a silly world. This they have done: and, in the state, as in the church,

church, these pretensions to a divine right have been generally carried highest by those, who have had the least pretension to the divine favour.

It is worth while to observe, on what principle some men were advanced to a great preeminence over others, in the early ages of those nations, that are a little known to us: I speak not of such as raised themselves by conquest, but of such as were raised by common consent. Now you will find, in all these proceedings, an entire uniformity of principle. The authors of such inventions, as were of general use to the well-being of mankind, were not only reverenced and obeyed during their lives, but worshipped after their deaths: they became principal gods, "Dii majo-"rum gentium." The founders of commonwealths, the lawgivers, and the heroes of particular states, became gods of a second class, "Dii minorum "gentium." All preeminence was given in Heaven, as well as in Earth, in proportion to the benefits that men received. Majesty was the first, and divinity the second, reward. Both were earned by services done to mankind, whom it was easy to lead, in those days of simplicity and superstition, from admiration and gratitude to adoration and expectation.

When advantage had been taken, by some particular men, of these dispositions in the generality, and religion and government were become two trades or mysteries, new means of attaining to this preeminence were soon devised, and new and even contrary motives worked the same effect. Merit had given rank; but rank was

soon

soon kept, and, which is more preposterous, obtained too, without merit. Men were than made kings for reasons as little relative to good government, as the neighing of the horse of the son of Hystaspes.

But the most prevalent and the general motive was proximity of blood to the last, not to the best king. Nobility in China mounts upwards: and he, who has it conferred upon him, ennobles his ancestors, not his posterity. A wise institution! and especially among a people in whose minds a great veneration for their forefathers has been always carefully maintained. But in China, as well as in most other countries, royalty has descended, and kingdoms have been reckoned the patrimonies of particular families.

I have read in one of the historians of the latter Roman empire, historians, by the way, whom I will not advise others to mispend their time in reading, that Sapores, the famous king of Persia, against whom Julian made the expedition wherein he lost his life, was crowned in his mother's womb. His father left her with child: the magi declared, that the child would be a male: whereupon the royal ensigns were brought forth, they were placed on her majesty's belly, and the princes and the satrapes prostrate recognised the embryo monarch. But to take a more known example, out of multitudes that present themselves; Domitian, the worst, and Trajan, the best of princes, were promoted to the empire by the same title. Domitian was the son of Flavius, and the brother, though possibly the poisoner too,

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of Titus Vespasian: Trajan was the adopted son of Nerva. Hereditary right served the purpose of one, as well as of the other: and if Trajan was translated to a place among the gods, this was no greater a distinction than some of the worst of his predecessors obtained, for reasons generally as good as that which Seneca puts into the mouth of Diespiter in the Apokolokyntosis of Claudius; "cum sit e republica esse aliquem, qui "cum Romulo possit ferventia rapa vorare." To say the truth, it would have been a wiser measure to have made these royal persons gods at once: as gods they would have done neither good nor hurt; but as emperors, in their way to divinity, they acted like devils.

If my readers are ready by this time to think me antimonarchial, and in particular an enemy to the succession of kings by hereditary right, I hope to be soon restored to their good opinion. I esteem monarchy above any other form of government, and hereditary monarchy above elective. I reverence kings, their office, their rights, their persons: and it will never be owing to the principles I am going to establish, because the character and government of a Patriot King can be established on no other, if their office and their right are not always held divine, and their persons always sacred.

Now, we are subject by the constitution of human nature, and therefore by the will of the Author of this and every other nature, to two laws. One given immediately to all men by God,

God, the same to all, and obligatory alike on all. The other given to man by man; and therefore not the same to all, nor obligatory alike on all: founded indeed on the same principles, but varied by different applications of them to times, to characters, and to a number, which may be reckoned infinite, of other circumstances. By the first, I mean the universal law of reason; and by the second, the particular law or constitution of laws, by which every distinct community has chosen to be governed.

The obligation of submission to both is discoverable by so clear and so simple a use of our intellectual faculties, that it may be said properly enough to be revealed to us by God: and though both these laws cannot be said properly to be given by him, yet our obligation to submit to the civil law is a principal paragraph in the natural law, which he has most manifestly given us. In truth we can no more doubt of the obligations of both these laws, than of the existence of the lawgiver. As supreme Lord over all his works, his general providence regards immediately the great commonwealth of mankind; but then, as supreme Lord likewise, his authority gives a sanction to the particular bodies of law which are made under it. The law of nature is the law of all his subjects: the constitutions of particular governments are like the by-laws of cities, or the appropriated customs of provinces. It follows, therefore, that he who breaks the laws of his country resists the ordinance of God, that is, the

law of his nature. God has instituted neither monarchy, nor aristocracy, nor democracy, nor mixed government: but though God has instituted no particular form of government among men, yet by the general laws of his kingdom he exacts our obedience to the laws of those communities, to which each of us is attached by birth, or to which we may be attached by a subsequent and lawful engagement.

From such plain, unrefined, and therefore, I suppose, true reasoning, the just authority of kings, and the due obedience of subjects, may be deduced with the utmost certainty. And surely it is far better for kings themselves to have their authority thus founded on principles incontestable, and on fair deductions from them, than on the chimeras of madmen, or, what has been more common, the sophisms of knaves. A human right, that cannot be controverted, is preferable, surely, to a pretended divine right, which every man must believe implicitly, as few will do, or not believe at all.

But the principles we have laid down do not stop here. A divine right in kings is to be deduced evidently from them: a divine right to govern well, and conformably to the constitution, at the head of which they are placed. A divine right to govern ill is an absurdity: to assert it, is blasphemy. A people may choose, or hereditary succession may raise, a bad prince to the throne; but a good king alone can derive his right to govern from

from God. The reason is plain: good government alone can be in the divine intention. God has made us to desire happiness; he has made our happiness dependent on society; and the happiness of society dependent on good or bad government. His intention, therefore, was, that government should be good.

This is essential to his wisdom; for wisdom consists, surely, in proportioning means to ends; therefore it cannot be said without absurd impiety, that he confers a right to oppose his intention.

The office of kings is, then, of right divine, and their persons are to be reputed sacred. As men, they have no such right, no such sacredness belonging to them: as kings, they have both, unless they forfeit them. Reverence for government obliges to reverence governors, who, for the sake of it, are raised above the level of other men: but reverence for governors, independently of government, any further than reverence would be due to their virtues if they were private men, is preposterous, and repugnant to common sense. The spring from which this legal reverence, for so I may call it, arises, is national, not personal. As well might we say, that a ship is built, and loaded, and manned for the sake of any particular pilot, instead of acknowledging, that the pilot is made for the sake of the ship, her lading, and her crew, who are always the owners in the political vessel; as to say, that kingdoms were institut-

ed for kings, not kings for kingdoms. In short, and to carry our allusion higher, majesty is not an inherent, but a reflected light.

All this is as true of hereditary, as it is of elective monarchy; though the scribblers for tyranny, under the name of monarchy, would have us believe, that there is something more august, and more sacred in one than the other. They are sacred alike, and this attribute is to be ascribed, or not ascribed, to them, as they answer, or do not answer, the ends of their institution. But there is another comparison to be made, in which a great and most important dissimilitude will be found between hereditary and elective monarchy. Nothing can be more absurd, in pure speculation, than an hereditary right in any mortal to govern other men: and yet, in practice, nothing can be more absurd, than to have a king to choose at every vacancy of a throne. We draw at a lottery indeed in one case, where there are many chances to lose, and few to gain. Bus have we much more advantage of this kind in the other? I think not. Upon these, and upon most occasions, the multitude would do at least as well to trust to chance as choice, and to their fortune as to their judgment. But in another respect, the advantage is entirely on the side of hereditary succession: for, in elective monarchies these elections, whether well or ill made, are often attended with such national calamities, that even the best reigns cannot make amends

for them: whereas, in hereditary monarchy, whether a good or a bad prince succeeds, these calamities are avoided. There is one source of evil the less open: and one source of evil the less in human affairs, where there are so many, is sufficient to decide. We may lament the imperfections of our human state, which is such, that in cases of the utmost importance to the order and good government of society, and by consequence to the happiness of our kind, we are reduced, by the very constitution of our nature, to have no part to take that our reason can approve absolutely. But though we lament it, we must submit to it. We must tell ourselves once for all, that perfect schemes are not adapted to our imperfect state; that Stoical morals and Platonick politicks are nothing better than amusements for those who have had little experience in the affairs of the world, and who have much leisure, "verba otioso-"rum senum ad imperitos juvenes;" which was the censure, and a just one too, that Dionysius passed on some of the doctrines of the father of the academy. In truth, all that human prudence can do, is to furnish expedients, and to compound, as it were, with general vice and folly; employing reason to act even against her own principles, and teaching us, if I may say so, "insanire cum "ratione," which appears on many occasions not to be the paradox it has been thought.

To conclude this head therefore: as I think a limited monarchy the best of governments, so I think

I think an hereditary monarchy the best of monarchies. I said a limited monarchy; for an unlimited monarchy, wherein arbitrary will, which is in truth no rule, is however the sole rule, or stands instead of all rule of government, must be allowed so great an absurdity, both in reason informed and uninformed by experience, that it seems a government fitter for savages than for civilized people.

But I think it proper to explain a little more what I mean, when I say a limited monarchy, that I may leave nothing untouched, which ought to be taken into consideration by us, when we attempt to fix our ideas of a Patriot King.

Among many reasons which determine me to prefer monarchy to every other form of government, this is a principal one. When monarchy is the essential form, it may be more easily and more usefully tempered with aristocracy or democracy, or both, than either of them, when they are the essential forms, can be tempered with monarchy. It seems to me, that the introduction of a real permanent monarchical power, or any thing more than the pageantry of it, into either of these, must destroy them and extinguish them, as a greater light extinguishes a less. Whereas it may easily be shown, and the true form of our government will demonstrate, without seeking any other example, that very considerable aristocratical and democratical powers may be grafted on a monarchical stock, without diminishing the lustre, or restraining the power and au-

thority of the prince, enough to alter in any degree the essential form.

A great difference is made in nature, and therefore the distinction should be always preserved in our notions, between two things that we are apt to confound in speculation, as they have been confounded in practice, legislative and monarchical power. There must be an absolute, unlimited, and uncontrollable power lodged somewhere in every government; but to constitute monarchy, or the government of a single person, it is not necessary, that this power should be lodged in the monarch alone. It is no more necessary, that he should exclusively and independently establish the rule of his government, than it is, that he should govern without any rule at all: and this surely will be thought reasonable by no man.

I would not say God governs by a rule that we know, or may know, as well as he, and upon our knowledge of which he appeals to men for the justice of his proceedings towards them; which a famous divine has impiously advanced, in a pretended demonstration of his being and attributes. God forbid! But this I may say, that God does always that which is fittest to be done, and that this fitness, whereof neither that presumptuous dogmatist was, nor any created being is, a competent judge, results from the various natures, and more various relations of things; so that, as creator of all systems by which these natures and relations are constituted, he prescribed to himself the rule, which he follows

lows as governour of every system of being. In short, with reverence be it spoken, God is a monarch, yet not an arbitrary but a limited monarch, limited by the rule which infinite wisdom prescribes to infinite power. I know well enough the impropriety of these expressions; but, when our ideas are inadequate, our expressions must needs be improper. Such conceptions, however, as we are able to form of these attributes, and of the exercise of them in the government of the universe, may serve to show what I have produced them to show. If governing without any rule, and by arbitrary will, be not essential to our idea of the monarchy of the Supreme Being, it is plainly ridiculous to suppose them necessarily included in the idea of a human monarchy: and though God, in his eternal ideas, for we are able to conceive no other manner of knowing, has prescribed to himself that rule by which he governs the universe he created, it will be just as ridiculous to affirm, that the idea of human monarchy cannot be preserved, if kings are obliged to govern according to a rule established by the wisdom of a state, that was a state before they were kings, and by the consent of a people that they did not most certainly create; especially when the whole executive power is exclusively in their hands, and the legislative power cannot be exercised without their concurrence.

There are limitations indeed, that would destroy the essential form of monarchy: or, in other words, a monarchical constitution may be

changed, under pretence of limiting the monarch. This happened among us in the last century, when the vilest usurpation, and the most infamous tyranny, were established over our nation, by some of the worst and some of the meanest men in it. I will not say, that the essential form of monarchy should be preserved though the preservation of it were to cause the loss of liberty. "Salus reipublicæ suprema lex "esto," is a fundamental law: and sure I am, the safety of a commonwealth is ill provided for, if the liberty be given up. But this I presume to say, and can demonstrate, that all the limitations necessary to preserve liberty, as long as the spirit of it subsists, and longer than that no limitations of monarchy, nor any other form of government, can preserve it, are compatible with monarchy. I think on these subjects, neither as the tories, nor as the whigs have thought: at least I endeavour to avoid the excesses of both. I neither dress up kings like so many burlesque Jupiters, weighing the fortunes of mankind in the scales of fate, and darting thunderbolts at the heads of rebellious giants: nor do I strip them naked, as it were, and leave them at most a few tattered rags to clothe their majesty, but such as can serve really as little for use as for ornament. My aim is to fix this principle; that limitations on a crown ought to be carried as far as it is necessary to secure the liberties of a people; and that all such limitations may subsist, without weakening or endangering monarchy.

I shall be told perhaps, for I have heard it said by

by many, that this point is imaginary; and that limitations, sufficient to procure good government and to secure liberty under a bad prince, cannot be made, unless they are such as will deprive the subjects of many benefits in the reign of a good prince, clog his administration, maintain an unjust jealousy between him and his people, and occasion a defect of power necessary to preserve the publick tranquillity, and to promote the national prosperity. If this was true, here would be a much more melancholy instance of the imperfection of our nature, and of the inefficacy of our reason to supply this imperfection, than the former. In the former, reason prompted by experience avoids a certain evil effectually, and is able to provide, in some measure, against the contingent evils, that may arise from the expedient itself. But in the latter, if what is there advanced was true, these provisions against contingent evils would, in some cases, be the occasions of much certain evil, and of positive good in none: under a good prince they would render the administration defective, and under a bad one there would be no government at all. But the truth is widely different from this representation. The limitations necessary to preserve liberty under monarchy will restrain effectually a bad prince, without being ever felt as shackles by a good one. Our constitution is brought, or almost brought, to such a point, a point of perfection I think it, that no king who is not in the true meaning of the word, a patriot, can govern Britain with ease, security, honour, dignity, or indeed with sufficient

cient power and strength. But yet a king, who is a patriot, may govern with all the former; and, beside them, with power as extended as the most absolute monarch can boast, and a power, too, far more agreeable in the enjoyment as well as more effectual in the operation.

To attain these great and noble ends, the patriotism must be real, and not in show alone. It is something to desire to appear a patriot, and the desire of having fame is a step towards deserving it, because it is a motive the more to deserve it. If it be true, as Tacitus says, "contemptu famæ contemni virtutem," that a contempt of a good name, or an indifference about it begets or accompanies always a contempt of virtue; the contrary will be true: and they are certainly both true. But this motive alone is not sufficient. To constitute a patriot, whether king or subject, there must be something more substantial than a desire of fame in the composition; and if there be not, this desire of fame will never rise above that sentiment, which may be compared to the coquetry of women; a fondness of transient applause, which is courted by vanity, given by flattery, and spends itself in show, like the qualities which acquire it. Patriotism must be founded in great principles, and supported by great virtues. The chief of these principles I have endeavoured to trace; and I will not scruple to assert, that a man can be a good king upon no other. He may, without them and by complection, be unambitious, generous, good-natured; but, without them, the exercise even of these

these virtues will be often ill directed: and, with principles of another sort, he will be drawn easily, notwithstanding these virtues, from all the purposes of his institution.

I mention these opposite principles the rather, because, instead of wondering that so many kings, unfit and unworthy to be trusted with the government of mankind, appear in the world, I have been tempted to wonder, that there are any tolerable; when I have considered the flattery, that environs them most commonly from the cradle, and the tendency of all those false notions, that are instilled into them by precept, and by example, by the habits of courts, and by the interested selfish views of courtiers. They are bred to esteem themselves of a distinct and superiour species among men, as men are among animals.

Lewis the fourteenth was a strong instance of the effect of this education, which trains up kings to be tyrants, without knowing that they are so. That oppression under which he kept his people, during the whole course of a long reign, might proceed, in some degree, from the natural haughtiness of his temper; but it proceeded, in a greater degree, from the principles and habits of his education. By this he had been brought to look on his kingdom as a patrimony, that descended to him from his ancestors, and that was to be considered in no other light: so that when a very considerable man had discoursed to him at large of the miserable condition, to which his people was reduced, and had frequently used this

this word, " l'état;" though the king approved the substance of all he had said, yet he was shocked at the frequent repetition of this word, and complained of it as of a kind of indecency to himself. This will not appear so strange to our second, as it may very justly to our first reflections; for what wonder is it, that princes are easily betrayed into an errour that takes it's rise in the general imperfection of our nature, in our pride, our vanity, and our presumption? the bastard children, but the children still of self-love; a spurious brood, but often a favourite brood, that governs the whole family. As men are apt to make themselves the measure of all being, so they make themselves the final cause of all creation. Thus the reputed orthodox philosophers in all ages have taught, that the world was made for man, the Earth for him to inhabit, and all the luminous bodies, in the immense expanse around us, for him to gaze at. Kings do no more, no not so much, when they imagine themselves the final cause for which societies were formed, and governments instituted.

This capital errour, in which almost every prince is confirmed by his education, has so great extent and so general influence, that a right to do every iniquitous thing in government may be derived from it. But, as if this was not enough, the characters of princes are spoiled many more ways by their education. I shall not descend into a detail of such particulars, nor presume so much as to hint what regulations might be made about the

the education of princes, nor what part our parliaments might take occasionally in this momentous affair, lest I should appear too refining, or too presumptuous, in my speculations. But I may assert in general, that the indifference of mankind upon this head, especially in a government constituted like ours, is monstrous.

I may also take notice of another cause of the mistakes of princes, I mean the general conduct of those who are brought near to their persons. Such men, let me say, have a particular duty arising from this very situation; a duty common to them all, because it arises not from their stations, which are different, but from their situation, which is the same. To enumerate the various applications of this duty would be too minute and tedious; but this may suffice, that all such men should bear constantly in mind, that the master they serve is, or is to be the king of their country: that their attachment to him, therefore, is not to be like that of other servants to other masters, for his sake alone, or for his sake and their own, but for the sake of their country likewise.

Craterus loves the king, but Hephestion loves Alexander, was a saying of the last, that has been often quoted, but not censured as it ought to be. Alexander gave the preference to the attachment of Hephestion; but this preference was due undoubtedly to that of Craterus. Attachment to a private person must comprehend a great concern for his character and his interests: but attachment to one who is, or may be a king, much more; because

cause the character of the latter is more important to himself and others; and because his interests are vastly more complicated with those of his country, and in some sort with those of mankind. Alexander himself seemed, upon one occasion, to make the distinction that should be always made between our attachments to a prince, and to any private person. It was when Parmenio advised him to accept the terms of peace which Darius offered: they were great, he thought them so; but he thought, no matter for my purpose whether justly or not, that it would be unbecoming him to accept them; therefore he rejected them, but acknowledged, "that he would have done as he "was advised to do, if he had been Parmenio."

As to persons who are not about a prince in the situation here spoken of, they can do little more than proportion their applause, and the demonstrations of their confidence and affection, to the benefits they actually receive from the prince on the throne, or to the just expectations that a successor gives them. It is of the latter I propose to speak here particularly. If he gives them those of a good reign, we may assure ourselves that they will carry, and in this case they ought to carry that applause, and those demonstrations of their confidence and affection, as high as such a prince himself can desire. Thus the prince and the people take, in effect, a sort of engagement with one another; the prince to govern well, and the people to honour and obey him. If he gives them expectations of a bad reign, they have this obligation

obligation to him at least, that he puts them early on their guard; and an obligation, and an advantage it will be, if they prepare for his accession as for a great and inevitable evil; and if they guard on every occasion against the ill use, they foresee, that he will make of money and power. Above all, they should not suffer themselves to be caught in the common snare, which is laid under specious pretences of "gaining such a prince, and of keeping him by publick compliances out of bad hands." That argument has been pressed more than once, has prevailed, and has been fruitful of most pernicious consequences. None indeed can be more absurd. It is not unlike the reasoning of those savages, who worship the devil, not because they love him or honour him, or expect any good from him, but that he may do them no hurt. Nay it is more absurd; for the savages suppose that the devil has, independently of them, the power to hurt them: whereas the others put more power into the hands of a prince, because he has already some power to hurt them; and trust to the justice and gratitude of one, who wants sense, virtue, or both, rather than increase and fortify the barriers against his folly and his vices.

But the truth is, that men, who reason and act in this manner, either mean, or else are led by such as mean, nothing more than to make a private court at the publick expense; who choose to be the instruments of a bad king, rather than to be out of power: and who are often so wicked, that they

they would prefer such a service to that of the best of kings. In fine, these reasons, and every other reason for providing against a bad reign in prospect, acquire a new force, when one weak or wicked prince is, in the order of succession, to follow another of the same character. Such provisions indeed are hardest to be obtained when they are the most necessary; that is, when the spirit of liberty begins to flag in a free people, and when they become disposed, by habits that have grown insensibly upon them, to a base submission. But they are necessary too, even when they are easiest to be obtained; that is, when the spirit of liberty is in full strength, and a disposition to oppose all instances of maleadministration, and to resist all attempts on liberty, is universal. In both cases, the endeavours of every man who loves his country will be employed with incessant care and constancy to obtain them, that good government and liberty may be the better preserved and secured; but in the latter case for this further reason also, that the preservation and security of these may be provided for, not only better, but more consistently with publick tranquillity, by constitutional methods, and a legal course of opposition to the excesses of regal or ministerial power. What I touch upon here might be made extremely plain; and I think the observation would appear to be of no small importance: but I should be carried too far from my subject, and my subject will afford me matter of more agreeable speculation.

It

It is true that a prince, who gives just reasons to expect, that his reign will be that of a Patriot King, may not always meet, and from all persons, such returns as such expectations deserve: but they must not hinder either the prince from continuing to give them, or the people from continuing to acknowledge them. United, none can hurt them: and if no artifice interrupts, no power can defeat, the effects of their perseverance. It will blast many a wicked project, keep virtue in countenance, and vice, to some degree at least, in awe. Nay, if it should fail to have these effects, if we should even suppose a good prince to suffer with the people, and, in some measure for them, yet many advantages would accrue to him: for instance, the cause of the people he is to govern, and his own cause, would be made the same by their common enemies. He would feel grievances himself as a subject, before he had the power of imposing them as a king. He would be formed in that school out of which the greatest and the best of monarchs have come, the school of affliction: and all the vices, which had prevailed before his reign, would serve as so many foils to the glories of it. But I hasten to speak of the greatest of all these advantages, and of that which a Patriot King will esteem to be such; whose ways of thinking and acting to so glorious a purpose as the reestablishment of a free constitution, when it has been shook by the iniquity of former administratons, I shall endeavour to explain.

What

What I have here said will pass among some for the reveries of a distempered brain, at best for the vain speculations of an idle man, who has lost sight of the world, or who had never sagacity enough to discern in government the practicable from the impracticable. Will it not be said, that this is advising a king to rouse a spirit, which may turn against himself; to reject the sole expedient of governing a limited monarchy with success; to labour to confine, instead of labouring to extend, his power: to patch up an old constitution, which his people are disposed to lay aside, instead of forming a new one more agreeable to them, and more advantageous to him; to refuse, in short, to be an absolute monarch, when every circumstance invites him to it? All these particulars, in every one of which the question is begged, will be thus represented, and will be then ridiculed as paradoxes fit to be ranked among the "mirabilia et ino-"pinata" of the Stoicks, and such as no man in his senses can maintain in earnest. These judgments and these reasonings may be expected in an age as futile and as corrupt as ours: in an age wherein so many betray the cause of liberty, and act not only without regard, but in direct opposition, to the most important interests of their country; not only occasionally, by surprise, by weakness, by strong temptation, or sly seduction, but constantly, steadily, by deliberate choice, and in pursuance of principles they avow and propagate: in an age when so many others shrink from the service of their country, or promote it coolly and

and uncertainly, in subordination to their own interest and humour, or to those of a party: in an age, when to assert the truth is called spreading of delusion, and to assert the cause of liberty and good government, is termed sowing of sedition. But I have declared already my unconcernedness at the censure or ridicule of such men as these; for whose supposed abilities I have much well-grounded contempt, and against whose real immorality I have as just indignation.

Let us come, therefore, to the bar of reason and experience, where we shall find these paradoxes admitted as plain and almost self-evident propositions, and these reveries and vain speculations as important truths, confirmed by experience in all ages and all countries.

Machiavel is an author who should have great authority with the persons likely to oppose me. He proposes to princes the amplification of their power, the extent of their dominion, and the subjection of their people, as the sole objects of their policy. He devises and recommends all means that tend to these purposes, without the consideration of any duty owing to God or man, or any regard to the morality or immorality of actions. Yet even he declares the affectation of virtue to be useful to princes: he is so far on my side in the present question. The only difference between us is, I would have the virtue real: he requires no more than the appearance of it.

In the tenth chapter of the first book of Discourses, he appears convinced, such is the force

of truth, but how consistently with himself let others determine, that the supreme glory of a prince accrues to him who establishes good government and a free constitution; and that a prince, ambitious of fame, must wish to come into possession of a disordered and corrupted state, not to finish the wicked work that others have begun, and to complete the ruin, but to stop the progress of the first, and to prevent the last. He thinks this not only the true way to fame, but to security and quiet; as the contrary leads, for here is no third way, and a prince must make his option between these two, not only to infamy, but to danger and to perpetual disquietude. He represents those who might establish a commonwealth or a legal monarchy, and who choose to improve the opportunity of establishing tyranny, that is, monarchy without any rule of law, as men who are deceived by false notions of good, and false appearances of glory, and who are in effect blind to their true interest in every respect: " ne si avvegono per " questo partito quanta fama, quanta gloria, " quanto honore, sicurta, quiete, con satisfatione " d'animo é fuggono, et in quanta infamia, " vituperio, biasimo, pericolo et inquietudine " incorrono." He touches another advantage which patriot princes reap: and in that he contradicts flatly the main point on which his half-taught scholars insist. He denies that such princes diminish their power by circumscribing it: and affirms, with truth on his side, that Timoleon,

moleon, and others of the same character whom he had cited, possessed as great authority in their country, with every other advantage besides, as Dionysius or Phalaris had acquired, with the loss of all those advantages. Thus far Machiavel reasons justly; but he takes in only a part of his subject, and confines himself to those motives that should determine a wise prince to maintain liberty, because it is his interest to do so. He rises no higher than the consideration of mere interest, of fame, of security, of quiet, and of power, all personal to the prince: and by such motives alone even his favourite Borgia might have been determined to affect the virtues of a patriot prince*; more than which this great doctor in political knowledge would not have required of him. But he is far from going up to that motive which should above all determine a good prince to hold this conduct, because it is his duty to do so; a duty that he owes to God by one law, and to his people by another. Now it is with this that I shall begin what I intend to offer concerning the system of principles and conduct by which a Patriot King will govern himself and his people. I shall not only begin higher, but descend into more detail, and keep still in my eye the application of the whole to the constitution of Great-Britain, even to the present state of our nation, and temper of our people.

I think enough has been already said, to establish the first and true principles of monarchical and indeed of every other kind of government:

and I will say with confidence, that no principles but these, and such as these, can be advanced, which deserve to be treated seriously; though Mr. Locke condescended to examine those of Filmer, more out of regard to the prejudices of the time, than to the importance of the work. Upon such foundations we must conclude, that since men were directed by nature to form societies, because they cannot by their nature subsist without them, nor in a state of individuality; and since they were directed in like manner to establish governments, because societies cannot be maintained without them, nor subsist in a state of anarchy; the ultimate end of all governments is the good of the people, for whose sake they were made, and without whose consent they could not have been made. In forming societies, and submitting to government, men gave up part of that liberty to which they are all born, and all alike. But why? Is government incompatible with a full enjoyment of liberty? By no means. But because popular liberty without government will degenerate into licence, as government without sufficient liberty will degenerate into tyranny, they are mutually necessary to each other, good government to support legal liberty, and legal liberty to preserve good government.

I speak not here of people, if any such there are, who have been savage or stupid enough to submit to tyranny by original contract, nor of those nations on whom tyranny has stolen as it were imperceptibly, or been imposed by violence,

violence, and settled by prescription. I shall exercise no political casuistry about the rights of such kings, and the obligations of such people. Men are to take their lots, perhaps, in governments as in climates, to fence against the inconveniencies of both, and to bear what they cannot alter. But I speak of people who have been wise and happy enough to establish, and to preserve, free constitutions of government, as the people of this island have done. To these, therefore, I say, that their kings are under the most sacred obligations that human law can create, and divine law authorize, to defend and maintain, in the first place, and preferably to every other consideration, the freedom of such constitutions.

The good of the people is the ultimate and true end of government. Governors are, therefore, appointed for this end, and the civil constitution which appoints them, and invests them with their power, is determined to do so by that law of nature and reason, which has determined the end of government, and which admits this form of government as the proper mean of arriving at it. Now, the greatest good of a people is their liberty: and, in the case here referred to, the people has judged it so, and provided for it accordingly. Liberty is to the collective body, what health is to every individual body. Without health no pleasure can be tasted by man: without liberty no happiness can be enjoyed by society. The obligation, therefore, to defend and

maintain the freedom of such constitutions, will appear most sacred to a Patriot King.

Kings who have weak understandings, bad hearts, and strong prejudices, and all these, as it often happens, inflamed by their passions, and rendered incurable by their self-conceit and presumption; such kings are apt to imagine, and they conduct themselves so as to make many of their subjects imagine, that the king and the people in free governments are rival powers, who stand in competition with one another, who have different interests, and must of course have different views: that the rights and privileges of the people are so many spoils taken from the right and prerogative of the crown; and that the rules and laws, made for the exercise and security of the former, are so many diminutions of their dignity, and restraints on their power.

A Patriot King will see all this in a far different and much truer light. The constitution will be considered by him as one law, consisting of two tables, containing the rule of his government, and the measure of his subjects' obedience; or as one system, composed of different parts and powers, but all duly proportioned to one another, and conspiring by their harmony to the perfection of the whole. He will make one, and but one, distinction between his rights, and those of his people: he will look on his to be a trust, and theirs a property. He will discern, that he can have a right to no more than is trusted to him by

by the constitution: and that his people, who had an original right to the whole by the law of nature, can have the sole indefeasible right to any part; and really have such a right to that part which they have reserved to themselves. In fine, the constitution will be reverenced by him as the law of God and of man; the force of which binds the king as much as the meanest subject, and the reason of which binds him much more.

Thus he will think, and on these principles he will act, whether he come to the throne by immediate or remote election. I say remote; for in hereditary monarchies, where men are not elected, families are: and, therefore, some authors would have it believed, that when a family has been once admitted, and an hereditary right to the crown recognized in it, that right cannot be forfeited, nor that throne become vacant, as long as any heir of the family remains. How much more agreeable to truth and to common sense would these authors have written, if they had maintained, that every prince who comes to a crown in the course of succession, were he the last of five hundred, comes to it under the same conditions under which the first took it, whether expressed or implied; as well as under those, if any such there be, which have been since made by legal authority: and that royal blood can give no right, nor length of succession any prescription, against the constitution of a government? The first and the last hold by the same tenure.

I mention this the rather, because I have an

imperfect remembrance, that some scribbler was employed, or employed himself, to assert the hereditary right of the present family. A task so unnecessary to any good purpose, that I believe a suspicion arose of it's having been designed for a bad one. A Patriot King will never countenance such impertinent fallacies, nor deign to lean on broken reeds. He knows that his right is founded on the laws of God and man, that none can shake it but himself, and that his own virtue is sufficient to maintain it against all opposition.

I have dwelt the longer on the first and general principles of monarchical government, and have recurred the oftener to them, because it seems to me that they are the seeds of patriotism, which must be sown as soon as possible in the mind of a prince, lest their growth should be checked by luxuriant weeds, which are apt to abound in such soils, and under which no crop of kingly virtues can ever flourish. A prince, who does not know the true principles, cannot propose to himself the true ends, of government: and he, who does not propose them, will never direct his conduct steadily to them. There is not a deeper, nor a finer observation in all my Lord Bacon's works, than one which I shall apply and paraphrase on this occasion. The most compendious, the most noble, and the most effectual remedy, which can be opposed to the uncertain and irregular motions of the human mind, agitated by various passions, allured by various temptations, inclining sometimes

times towards a state of moral perfection, and oftener, even in the best, towards a state of moral depravation, is this. We must choose betimes such virtuous objects as are proportioned to the means we have of pursuing them, and as belong particularly to the stations we are in, and to the duties of those stations. We must determine and fix our minds in such manner upon them, that the pursuit of them may become the business, and the attainment of them the end, of our whole lives. Thus we shall imitate the great operations of nature, and not the feeble, slow, and imperfect operations of art. We must not proceed, in forming the moral character, as a statuary proceeds in forming a statue, who works sometimes on the face, sometimes on one part, and sometimes on another: but we must proceed, and it is in our power to proceed, as nature does in forming a flower, an animal, or any other of her productions; "rudimenta "partium omnium simul parit et producit." "She throws out all together, and at once, the "whole system of every being, and the rudiments "of all the parts." The vegetable or the animal grows in bulk and increases in strength; but is the same from the first. Just so our Patriot King must be a patriot from the first. He must be such in resolution, before he grows such in practice. He must fix at once the general principles and ends of all his actions, and determine that his whole conduct shall be regulated by them, and directed to them. When he has done this, he will

will have turned, by one great effort, the bent of his mind so strongly towards the perfection of a kingly character, that he will exercise with ease, and as it were by a natural determination, all the virtues of it; which will be suggested to him on every occasion by the principles wherewith his mind is imbued, and by those ends that are the constant objects of his attention.

Let us then see in what manner, and with what effect he will do this, upon the greatest occasion he can have of exercising these virtues, the maintenance of liberty, and the reestablishment of a free constitution.

The freedom of a constitution rests on two points. The orders of it are one: so Machiavel calls them, and I know not how to call them more significantly. He means not only the forms and customs, but the different classes and assemblies of men, with different powers and privileges attributed to them, which are established in the state. The spirit and character of the people are the other. On the mutual conformity and harmony of these the preservation of liberty depends. To take away, or essentially to alter the former, cannot be brought to pass, while the latter remains in original purity and vigour: nor can liberty be destroyed by this method, unless the attempt be made with a military force sufficient to conquer the nation, which would not submit in this case till it was conquered, nor with much security to the conqueror even then. But these orders of the state may be essentially altered, and

serve

serve more effectually to the destruction of liberty, than the taking of them away would serve, if the spirit and character of the people are lost.

Now this method of destroying liberty is the most dangerous on many accounts, particularly on this; that even the reign of the weakest prince, and the policy of the weakest ministry, may effect the destruction, when circumstances are favourable to this method. If a people is growing corrupt, there is no need of capacity to contrive, nor of insinuation to gain, nor of plausibility to seduce, nor of eloquence to persuade, nor of authority to impose, nor of courage to attempt. The most incapable, awkward, ungracious, shocking, profligate, and timorous wretches, invested with power, and masters of the purse, will be sufficient for the work, when the people are complices in it. Luxury is rapacious; let them feed it: the more it is fed, the more profuse it will grow. Want is the consequence of profusion, venality of want, and dependence of venality. By this progression, the first men of a nation will become the pensioners of the last: and he who has talents, the most implicit tool to him who has none. The distemper will soon descend, not indeed to make a deposit below, and to remain there, but to pervade the whole body.

It may seem a singular, but it is perhaps a true proposition, that such a king and such a ministry are more likely to begin, and to pursue with success, this method of destroying a free constitution

tution of government, than a king and a ministry that were held in great esteem would be. This very esteem might put many on their guard against the latter; but the former may draw from contempt the advantage of not being feared: and an advantage this is in the beginning of corruption. Men are willing to excuse, not only to others but to themselves, the first steps they take in vice, and especially in vice that affects the publick, and whereof the publick has a right to complain. Those, therefore, who might withstand corruption in one case, from a persuasion that the consequence was too certain to leave them any excuse, may yield to it when they can flatter themselves, and endeavour to flatter others, that liberty cannot be destroyed, nor the constitution be demolished, by such hands as hold the sceptre, and guide the reins of the administration. But alas! the flattery is gross, and the excuse without colour. These men may ruin their country, but they cannot impose on any, unless it be on themselves. Nor will even this imposition on themselves be long necessary. Their consciences will be soon seared, by habit and by example: and they, who wanted an excuse to begin, will want none to continue and to complete, the tragedy of their country. Old men will outlive the shame of losing liberty, and young men will arise who know not that it ever existed. A spirit of slavery will oppose and oppress the spirit of liberty, and seem at least to be the genius of the nation. Such too it will become in time, when

corruption

corruption has once grown to this height, unless the progress of it can be interrupted.

How inestimable a blessing therefore must the succession of a Patriot King be esteemed in such circumstances as these, which would be a blessing, and a great one too, in any other? He, and he alone, can save a country whose ruin is so far advanced. The utmost that private men can do, who remain untainted by the general contagion, is to keep the spirit of liberty alive in a few breasts; to protest against what they cannot hinder, and to claim on every occasion what they cannot by their own strength recover.

Machiavel has treated, in the discourses before cited, this question, "whether, when the people "are grown corrupt, a free government can be "maintained if they enjoy it; or established, if "they enjoy it not?" And upon the whole matter he concludes for the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of succeeding in either case. It will be worth while to observe his way of reasoning. He asserts very truly, and proves by the example of the Roman commonwealth; that those orders which are proper to maintain liberty, while a people remain uncorrupt, become improper and hurtful to liberty, when a people is grown corrupt. To remedy this abuse, new laws alone will not be sufficient. These orders, therefore, must be changed, according to him, and the constitution must be adapted to the depraved manners of the people. He shows, that such a change in the orders, and constituent parts of the government,

ment, is impracticable, whether the attempt be made by gentle and slow, or by violent and precipitate measures; and from thence he concludes, that a free commonwealth can neither be maintained by a corrupt people, nor be established among them. But he adds, that, "if this can "possibly be done, it must be done by drawing "the constitution to the monarchical form of go-"vernment," "acciochè quelli huomini i quali "dalle leggi non possono essere corretti, fussero "da una podestá, in qualche modo, frenati." "That a corrupt people, whom law cannot cor-"rect, may be restrained and corrected by a "kingly power." Here is the hinge on which the whole turns. Another advantage that a free monarchy has over all other forms of free government, beside the advantage of being more easily and more usefully tempered with aristocratical and democratical powers, which is mentioned above, is this. Those governments are made up of different parts, and are apt to be disjointed by the shocks to which they are exposed: but a free monarchical government is more compact, because there is a part the more that keeps, like the key-stone of a vault, the whole building together. They cannot be mended in a state of corruption, they must be in effect constituted anew, and in that attempt they may be dissolved for ever: but this is not the case of a free monarchy. To preserve liberty by new laws and new schemes of government, while the corruption of a people continues and grows, is absolutely impossible: but

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to restore and preserve it under old laws, and an old constitution, by reinfusing into the minds of men the spirit of this constitution, is not only possible, but is, in a particular manner, easy to a king. A corrupt commonwealth remains without remedy, though all the orders and forms of it subsist: a free monarchical government cannot remain absolutely so, as long as the orders and forms of the constitution subsist. These, alone, are indeed nothing more than the dead letter of freedom, or masks of liberty. In the first character they serve to no good purpose whatsoever: in the second they serve to a bad one; because tyranny, or government by will, becomes more severe, and more secure, under their disguise, than it would if it was barefaced and avowed. But a king can, easily to himself and without violence to his people, renew the spirit of liberty in their minds, quicken this dead letter, and pull off this mask.

As soon as corruption ceases to be an expedient of government, and it will cease to be such as soon as a Patriot King is raised to the throne, the panacea is applied; the spirit of the constitution revives of course: and, as fast as it revives, the orders and forms of the constitution are restored to their primitive integrity, and become what they were intended to be, real barriers against arbitrary power, not blinds nor masks under which tyranny may lie concealed. Depravation of manners exposed the constitution to ruin: reformation will secure it. Men decline easily from

from virtue; for there is a devil too in the political system, a constant tempter at hand: a Patriot King will want neither power nor inclination to cast out this devil, to make the temptation cease, and to deliver his subjects, if not from the guilt, yet from the consequence, of their fall. Under him, they will not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; for, by rendering publick virtue and real capacity the sole means of acquiring any degree of power or profit in the state, he will set the passions of their hearts on the side of liberty and good government. A Patriot King is the most powerful of all reformers; for he is himself a sort of standing miracle, so rarely seen and so little understood, that the sure effects of his appearance will be admiration and love in every honest breast, confusion and terrour to every guilty conscience, but submission and resignation in all. A new people will seem to arise with a new king. Innumerable metamorphoses, like those which poets feign, will happen in very deed: and, while men are conscious that they are the same individuals, the difference of their sentiments will almost persuade them, that they are changed into different beings.

But, that we may not expect more from such a king than even he can perform, it is necessary to premise another general observation, after which I shall descend into some that will be more particular.

Absolute stability is not to be expected in any thing human; for that which exists immutably

exists alone necessarily, and this attribute of the Supreme Being, can neither belong to man, nor to the works of man. The best instituted governments, like the best constituted animal bodies, carry in them the seeds of their destruction: and, though they grow and improve for a time, they will soon tend visibly to their dissolution. Every hour they live is an hour the less that they have to live. All that can be done, therefore, to prolong the duration of a good government, is to draw it back, on every favourable occasion, to the first good principles on which it was founded. When these occasions happen often, and are well improved, such governments are prosperous and durable. When they happen seldom, or are ill improved, these political bodies live in pain, or in languor, and die soon.

A Patriot King affords one of the occasions I mention in a free monarchical state, and the very best that can happen. It should be improved, like snatches of fair weather at sea, to repair the damages sustained in the last storm, and to prepare to resist the next. For such a king cannot secure to his people a succession of princes like himself. He will do all he can toward it, by his example and by his instruction. But after all, the royal mantle will not convey the spirit of patriotism into another king, as the mantle of Elijah did the gift of prophecy into another prophet. The utmost he can do, and that which deserves the utmost gratitude from his subjects, is to restore

good government, to revive the spirit of it, and to maintain and confirm both, during the whole course of his reign. The rest his people must do for themselves. If they do not, they will have none but themselves to blame: if they do, they will have the principal obligation to him. In all events, they will have been free men one reign the longer by his means, and perhaps more; since he will leave them much better prepared and disposed to defend their liberties, than he found them.

This general observation being made, let us now descend, in some detail, to the particular steps and measures that such a king must pursue, to merit a much nobler title than all those which many princes of the west, as well as the east, are so proud to accumulate.

First then, he must begin to govern as soon as he begins to reign. For the very first steps he makes in government will give the first impression, and as it were the presage of his reign; and may be of great importance in many other respects beside that of opinion and reputation. His first care will be, no doubt, to purge his court, and to call into the administration such men as he can assure himself will serve on the same principles on which he intends to govern.

As to the first point; if the precedent reign has been bad, we know how he will find the court composed. The men in power will be some of those adventurers, busy and bold, who thrust and crowd themselves early into the intrigue of party and the management of affairs of state, often without

without true ability, always without true ambition, or even the appearances of virtue: who mean nothing more than what is called making a fortune, the acquisition of wealth to satisfy avarice, and of titles and ribands to satisfy vanity. Such as these are sure to be employed by a weak, or a wicked king: they impose on the first, and are chosen by the last. Nor is it marvellous that they are so, since every other want is supplied in them by the want of good principles and a good conscience; and since these defects become ministerial perfections, in a reign when measures are pursued and designs carried on that every honest man will disapprove. All the prostitutes who set themselves to sale, all the locusts who devour the land, with crowds of spies, parasites, and sycophants, will surround the throne under the patronage of such ministers; and whole swarms of little, noisome, nameless insects will hum and buzz in every corner of the court. Such ministers will be cast off, and such abettors of a ministry will be chased away, together and at once, by a Patriot King.

Some of them perhaps will be abandoned by him; not to party-fury, but to national justice; not to sate private resentments, and to serve particular interests, but to make satisfaction for wrongs done to their country, and to stand as examples of terrour to future administrations. Clemency makes, no doubt, an amiable part of the character I attempt to draw; but clemency, to be a virtue, must have it's bounds, like other virtues:

and surely these bounds are extended enough by a maxim I have read somewhere, that frailties and even vices may be passed over, but not enormous crimes; " multa donanda ingeniis puto, sed do- " nanda vitia, non portenta."

Among the bad company, with which such a court will abound, may be reckoned a sort of men too low to be much regarded, and too high to be quite neglected; the lumber of every administration, the furniture of every court. These gilt carved things are seldom answerable for more than the men on a chess-board, who are moved about at will, and on whom the conduct of the game is not to be charged. Some of these every prince must have about him. The pageantry of a court requires that he should: and this pageantry, like many other despicable things, ought not to be laid aside. But as much sameness as there may appear in the characters of this sort of men, there is one distinction that will be made, whenever a good prince succeeds to the throne after an iniquitous administration: the distinction I mean is, between those who have affected to dip themselves deeply in precedent iniquities, and those who have had the virtue to keep aloof from them, or the good luck not to be called to any share in them. And thus much for the first point, that of purging his court.

As to the second, that of calling to his administration such men as he can assure himself will serve on the same principles on which he intends to govern, there is no need to enlarge much upon

it. A good prince will no more choose ill men, than a wise prince will choose fools. Deception in one case is indeed more easy, than in the other; because a knave may be an artful hypocrite, whereas a silly fellow can never impose himself for a man of sense. And least of all, in a country like ours, can either of these deceptions happen, if any degree of the discernment of spirits be employed to choose. The reason is, because every man here, who stands forward enough in rank and reputation to be called to the councils of his king, must have given proofs before-hand of his patriotism, as well as of his capacity, if he has either, sufficient to determine his general character.

There is, however, one distinction to be made as to the capacity of ministers, on which I will insist a little: because I think it very important at all times, particularly so at this time: and because it escapes observation most commonly. The distinction I mean is that between a cunning man and a wise man: and this distinction is built on a manifest difference in nature, how imperceptible soever it may become to weak eyes, or to eyes that look at their object through the false medium of custom and habit. My lord Bacon says, that cunning is left-handed or crooked wisdom. I would rather say that it is a part, but the lowest part of wisdom; employed alone by some, because they have not the other parts to employ; and by some, because it is as much as they want, within those bounds of action which they prescribe

to themselves, and sufficient to the ends that they propose. The difference seems to consist in degree, and application, rather than in kind. Wisdom is neither left-handed, nor crooked: but the heads of some men contain little, and the hearts of others employ it wrong. To use my lord Bacon's own comparison, the cunning man knows how to pack the cards, the wise man how to play the game better: but it would be of no use to the first to pack the cards, if his knowledge stopped here, and he had no skill in the game; nor to the second to play the game better, if he did not know how to pack the cards, that he might unpack them by new shuffling. Inferiour wisdom or cunning may get the better of folly: but superiour wisdom will get the better of cunning. Wisdom and cunning have often the same objects; but a wise man will have more and greater in his view. The least will not fill his soul, nor ever become the principal there; but will be pursued in subserviency, in subordination at least, to the other. Wisdom and cunning may employ sometimes the same means too: but the wise man stoops to these means, and the other cannot rise above them. Simulation and dissimulation, for instance, are the chief arts of cunning: the first will be esteemed always by a wise man unworthy of him, and will be therefore avoided by him, in every possible case; for, to resume my Lord Bacon's comparison, simulation is put on that we may look into the cards of another, whereas dissimulation intends nothing more than to hide our

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own. Simulation is a stiletto, not only an offensive, but an unlawful weapon: and the use of it may be rarely, very rarely, excused, but never justified. Dissimulation is a shield, as secrecy is armour: and it is no more possible to preserve secrecy in the administration of publick affairs without some degree of dissimulation, than it is to succeed in it without secrecy. These two arts of cunning are like the alloy mingled with pure ore. A little is necessary, and will not debase the coin below it's proper standard; but if more than that little be employed, the coin loses it's currency, and the coiner his credit.

We may observe much the same difference between wisdom and cunning, both as to the objects they propose and to the means they employ, as we observe between the visual powers of different men. One sees distinctly the objects that are near to him, their immediate relations, and their direct tendencies: and a sight like this serves well enough the purpose of those who concern themselves no further. The cunning minister is one of those; he neither sees, nor is concerned to see, any further than his personal interests, and the support of his administration, require. If such a man overcomes any actual difficulty, avoids any immediate distress, or, without doing either of these effectually, gains a little time, by all the low artifice which cunning is ready to suggest, and baseness of mind to employ, he triumphs, and is flattered by his mercenary train, on the great event; which amounts often to no more

than this, that he got into distress by one series of faults, and out of it by another. The wise minister sees, and is concerned to see further, because government has a further concern: he sees the objects that are distant as well as those that are near, and all their remote relations, and even their indirect tendencies. He thinks of fame as well as of applause, and prefers that, which to be enjoyed must be given, to that which may be bought. He considers his administration as a single day in the great year of government; but as a day that is affected by those which went before, and that must affect those which are to follow. He combines, therefore, and compares all these objects, relations, and tendencies; and the judgment he makes, on an entire not a partial survey of them, is the rule of his conduct. That scheme of the reason of state, which lies open before a wise minister, contains all the great principles of government, and all the great interests of his country: so that, as he prepares some events, he prepares against others, whether they be likely to happen during his administration, or in some future time.

Many reflections might be added to these, and many examples be brought to illustrate them. Some I could draw from the men I have seen at the head of business, and make very strong contrasts of men of great wisdom with those of mere cunning. But I conclude this head, that I may proceed to another of no less importance.

To espouse no party, but to govern like the common

common father of his people, is so essential to the character of a Patriot King, that he who does otherwise forfeits the title. It is the peculiar privilege and glory of this character, that princes who maintain it, and they alone, are so far from the necessity, that they are not exposed to the temptation, of governing by a party; which must always end in the government of a faction: the faction of the prince, if he has ability; the faction of his ministers, if he has not; and either one way or other, in the oppression of the people. For faction is to party what the superlative is to the positive: party is a political evil, and faction is the worst of all parties. The true image of a free people, governed by a Patriot King, is that of a patriarchal family, where the head and all the members are united by one common interest, and animated by one common spirit: and where, if any are perverse enough to have another, they will be soon borne down by the superiority of those who have the same; and, far from making a division, they will but confirm the union of the little state. That to approach as near as possible to these ideas of perfect government, and social happiness under it, is desirable in every state, no man will be absurd enough to deny. The sole question is, therefore, how near to them it is possible to attain? For, if this attempt be not absolutely impracticable, all the views of a Patriot King will be directed to make it succeed. Instead of abetting the divisions of his people, he will endeavour to unite them, and to be himself the centre of their union:

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instead of putting himself at the head of one party in order to govern his people, he will put himself at the head of his people in order to govern, or more properly to subdue, all parties. Now, to arrive at this desirable union, and to maintain it, will be found more difficult in some cases than in others, but absolutely impossible in none, to a wise and good prince.

If his people are united in their submission to him, and in their attachment to the established government, he must not only espouse but create a party, in order to govern by one: and what should tempt him to pursue so wild a measure? A prince, who aims at more power than the constitution gives him, may be so tempted; because he may hope to obtain in the disorders of the state what cannot be obtained in quiet times; and because contending parties will give what a nation will not. Parties, even before they degenerate into absolute factions, are still numbers of men associated together for certain purposes, and certain interests, which are not, or which are not allowed to be those of the community by others. A more private or personal interest comes but too soon and too often, to be superadded, and to grow predominant in them: and when it does so, whatever occasions or principles began to form them, the same logick prevails in them that prevails in every church. The interest of the state is supposed to be that of the party, as the interest of religion is supposed to be that of the church; and, with this pretence or prepossession, the interest of the state becomes, like that of religion,

ligion, a remote consideration, is never pursued for it's own sake, and is often sacrificed to the other. A king, therefore, who has ill designs to carry on, must endeavour to divide a united people; and by blending or seeming to blend his interests with that of a party, he may succeed perhaps, and his party and he may share the spoils of a ruined nation: but such a party is then become a faction, such a king is a tyrant, and such a government is a conspiracy. A Patriot King must renounce his character, to have such designs; or act against his own designs, to pursue such methods. Both are too absurd to be supposed. It remains, therefore, that as all the good ends of government are most attainable in a united state, and as the divisions of a people can serve to bad purposes alone, the king we suppose here will deem the union of his subjects his greatest advantage, and will think himself happy to find that established, which he would have employed the whole labour of his life to bring about. This seems so plain, that I am ready to make excuses for having insisted at all upon it.

Let us turn ourselves to another supposition, to that of a divided state. This will fall in oftener with the ordinary course of things in free governments, and especially after iniquitous and weak administrations. Such a state may be better or worse, and the great and good purposes of a Patriot King more or less attainable in it, according to the different nature of those divisions: and

and, therefore, we will consider this state in different lights.

A people may be united in submission to the prince, and to the establishment, and yet be divided about general principles, or particular measures of government. In the first case, they will do by their constitution what has been frequently done by the Scripture, strain it to their own notions and prejudices; and, if they cannot strain it, alter it as much as is necessary to render it conformable to them. In the second, they will support or oppose particular acts of administrations and defend or attack the persons employed in them: and both these ways a conflict of parties may arise, but no great difficulty to a prince who determines to pursue the union of his subjects, and the prosperity of his kingdoms independently of all parties.

When parties are divided by different notions and principles concerning some particular ecclesiastical, or civil institutions, the constitution, which should be their rule, must be that of the prince. He may and he ought to show his dislike or his favour, as he judges the constitution may be hurt or improved, by one side or the other. The hurt he is never to suffer, not for his own sake; and therefore surely not for the sake of any whimsical, factious, or ambitious set of men. The improvement he must always desire; but as every new modification in a scheme of government and of national policy is of great importance, and requires more and deeper consideration than the warmth,

warmth, and hurry, and rashness of party-conduct admit, the duty of a prince seems to require that he should render by his influence the proceedings more orderly and more deliberate, even when he approves the end to which they are directed. All this may be done by him without fomenting division: and, far from forming or espousing a party, he will defeat party in defence of the constitution, on some occasions; and lead men, from acting with a party-spirit, to act with a national spirit, on others.

When the division is about particular measures of government, and the conduct of the administration is alone concerned, a Patriot King will stand in want of party as little as in any other case. Under his reign, the opportunities of forming an opposition of this sort will be rare, and the pretences generally weak. Nay, the motives to it will lose much of their force, when a government is strong in reputation, and men are kept in good humour by feeling the rod of a party on no occasion, though they feel the weight of the sceptre on some. Such opportunities, however, may happen; and there may be reason, as well as pretences, sometimes for opposition even in such a reign: at least we will suppose so, that we may include in this argument every contingent case. Grievances then are complained of, mistakes and abuses in government are pointed out, and ministers are prosecuted by their enemies. Shall the prince on the throne form a party

party by intrigue, and by secret and corrupt influence, to oppose the prosecution? When the prince and the ministers are "participes criminis," when every thing is to be defended, lest something should come out, that may unravel the silly wicked scheme, and disclose to publick sight the whole turpitude of the administration; there is no help, this must be done, and such a party must be formed, because such a party alone will submit to a drudgery of this kind. But a prince, who is not in these circumstances, will not have recourse to these means. He has others more open, more noble, and more effectual in his power: he knows that the views of his government are right, and that the tenour of his administration is good; but he knows that neither he nor his ministers are infallible, nor impeccable. There may be abuses in his government, mistakes in his administration, and guilt in his ministers, which he has not observed: and he will be far from imputing the complaints, that gave him occasion to observe them, to a spirit of party; much less will he treat those who carry on such prosecutions in a legal manner, as incendiaries, and as enemies to his government. On the contrary, he will distinguish the voice of his people from the clamour of a faction, and will hearken to it. He will redress grievances, correct errours, and reform or punish ministers. This he will do as a good prince: and as a wise one, he will do it in such a manner that his dignity shall be maintained,

and

and that his authority shall increase, with his reputation, by it.

Should the efforts of a mere faction be bent to calumniate his government, and to distress the administration on groundless pretences, and for insufficient reasons; he will not neglect, but he will not apprehend neither, the short-lived and contemptible scheme. He will indeed have no reason to do so; for let the fautors of male-administration, whenever an opposition is made to it, affect to insinuate as much as they please, that their masters are in no other circumstances than those to which the very best ministers stand exposed, objects of general envy and of particular malice, it will remain eternally true, that groundless opposition, in a well-regulated monarchy, can never be strong and durable. To be convinced of the truth of this proposition, one needs only to reflect how many well-grounded attacks have been defeated, and how few have succeeded, against the most wicked and the weakest administrations. Every king of Britain has means enough in his power, to defeat and to calm opposition. But a Patriot King, above all others, may safely rest his cause on the innocency of his administration, on the constitutional strength of the crown, and on the concurrence of his people, to whom he dares appeal, and by whom he will be supported.

To conclude all I will say on the divisions of this kind; let me add, that the case of a groundless opposition can hardly happen in a bad reign, because

because in such a reign just occasions of opposition must of course be frequently given, as we have allowed that they may be given sometimes, though very rarely, in a good reign; but that, whether it be well or ill grounded, whether it be that of the nation, or that of a faction, the conduct of the prince with respect to it will be the same; and one way or other this conduct must have a very fatal event. Such a prince will not mend the administration, as long as he can resist the justest and most popular opposition: and, therefore, this opposition will last and grow, as long as a free constitution is in force, and the spirit of liberty is preserved; for so long even a change of his ministers, without a change of his measures, will not be sufficient. The former without the latter is a mere banter, and would be deemed and taken for such, by every man who did not oppose on a factious principle; that I mean of getting into power at any rate, and using it as ill, perhaps worse than the men he helped to turn out of it. Now if such men as these abound, and they will abound in the decline of a free government, a bad prince, whether he changes or does not change his ministers, may hope to govern by the spirit and art of a faction, against the spirit and strength of the nation. His character may be too low, and that of his minister too odious, to form originally even a faction that shall be able to defend them. But they may apply to their purposes a party that was formed on far different occasions, and bring numbers to fight for a cause in which many of them would

would not have listed. The names, and with the names the animosity of parties, may be kept up, when the causes that formed them subsist no longer.

When a party is thus revived or continued in the spirit of a faction, the corrupt and the infatuated members of it will act without any regard to right or wrong: and they who have asserted liberty in one reign, or opposed invasions of one kind, will give it up in another reign, and abet invasions of another kind; though they still distinguish themselves by the same appellation, still spread the same banner, and still deafen their adversaries and one another with the same cry. If the national cause prevails against all the wicked arts of corruption and division, that an obstinate prince and flagitious ministry can employ; yet will the struggle be long, and the difficulties, the distresses, and the danger great, both to the king and to the people. The best he can hope for, in such a case, will be to escape with a diminution of his reputation, authority, and power. He may be exposed to something worse; and his obstinacy may force things to such extremities, as they who oppose him will lament, and as the preservation of liberty and good government can alone justify. If the wicked arts I speak of prevail, faction will be propagated through the whole nation, an ill or well grounded opposition will be the question no longer, and the contest among parties will be, who shall govern, not, how they shall be governed. In short, universal confusion will follow, and a

complete victory, on any side, will enslave all sides.

I have not overcharged the draught. Such consequences must follow such a conduct: and therefore let me ask, how much more safe, more easy, more pleasant, more honourable is it, for a prince to correct, if he has not prevented, male-administration? That he may be able to rest his cause, as I said before, on the strength of the crown and the concurrence of his people, whenever any faction presumes to rise in opposition to him.

This a Patriot King will do. He may favour one party and discourage another, upon occasions wherein the state of his kingdom makes such a temporary measure necessary: but he will espouse none, much less will he proscribe any. He will list no party, much less will he do the meanest and most imprudent thing a king can do, list himself in any. It will be his aim to pursue true principles of government independently of all: and, by a steady adherence to this measure, his reign will become an undeniable and glorious proof, that a wise and good prince may unite his subjects, and be himself the centre of their union, notwithstanding any of these divisions that have been hitherto mentioned.

Let us now view the divided state of a nation in another light. In this, the divisions will appear more odious, more dangerous; less dependent on the influence, and less subject to the authority of the crown. Such will be the state, whenever a people is divided about submission to

their prince, and a party is formed, of spirit and strength sufficient to oppose, even in arms, the established government. But in this case, desperate as it may seem, a Patriot King will not despair of reconciling and reuniting his subjects to himself and to one another. He may be obliged, perhaps, as Henry the fourth of France was, to conquer his own; but then, like that great prince, if he is the conqueror, he will be the father too, of his people. He must pursue in arms those who presume to take arms against him; but he will pursue them like rebellious children whom he seeks to reclaim, and not like irreconcilable enemies whom he endeavours to exterminate. Another prince may blow up the flame of civil war by unprovoked severity, render those zealous against him who were at worst indifferent, and determine the disaffection of others to open rebellion. When he has prevailed against the faction he helped to form, as he could not have prevailed if the bent of the nation had been against him, he may be willing to ascribe his success to a party, that he may have that pretence to govern by a party: and, far from reconciling the minds that have been alienated from him, and reuniting his subjects in a willing unforced submission to him, he may be content to maintain himself on that throne, where the laws of God and man have placed him, by the melancholy expedient that usurpers and tyrants, who have no other in their power, employ; the expedient of force. But a Patriot King will act with another

spirit, and entertain nobler and wiser views, from first to last, and through the whole course of such a conjuncture. Nothing less than the hearts of his people will content such a prince; nor will he think his throne established, till it is established there. That he may have time and opportunity to gain them, therefore, he will prevent the flame from breaking out, if by art and management he can do it. If he cannot, he will endeavour to keep it from spreading: and if the phrensy of rebellion disappoints him in both these attempts, he will remember peace, like the heroick king I just now quoted, in the midst of war. Like him he will forego advantages of pushing the latter, rather than lose an opportunity of promoting the former: like him, in the heat of battle he will spare, and in the triumph of victory condescend: like him, he will beat down the violence of this flame by his valour, and extinguish even the embers of it by his lenity.

It may happen, that a prince, capable of holding such a conduct as this, may not have the opportunity. He may succeed to the throne after a contrary conduct has been held: and when, among other divisions which maleadministration and the tyranny of faction have increased and confirmed, there is one against the established government still in being, though not still in arms. The use is obvious, which a faction in power might make of such a circumstance under a weak prince, by ranking in that division all those who opposed the administration; or at

least by holding out equal danger to him from two quarters; from their enemies who meant him no harm, and from his enemies who could do him none. But so gross an artifice will not impose on a prince of another character: he will soon discern the distinctions it becomes him to make. He will see, in this instance, how faction breeds, nourishes, and perpetuates faction: he will observe how far that of the court contributed to form the other, and contributes still to keep it in countenance and credit, among those who consider more what such men are against, than what they are for. He will observe, how much that of the disaffected gives pretence to the other who keeps a monopoly of power and wealth; one of which oppresses, and the other beggars, the rest of the nation. His penetration will soon discover, that these factions break in but little on the body of his people, and that it depends on him alone to take from them even the strength they have; because that of the former is acquired entirely by his authority and purse, and that of the latter principally by the abuse which the former makes of both. Upon the whole, the measures he has to pursue towards the great object of a Patriot King, the union of his people, will appear to him extremely easy. How should they be otherwise? One of the factions must be dissolved, the moment that the favour of the prince is withdrawn: and the other is disarmed, as soon as it is marked out. It will have no shelter, and it must therefore be so marked out, under a good

and wise administration; for, whether the members of it avow their principles by refusing those tests of fidelity which the law requires, or perjure themselves by taking them, they will be known alike. One difference, and but one will be made between them in the general sense of mankind, a difference arising from the greater degree of infamy that will belong justly to the latter. The first may pass for fools; the latter must pass, without excuse, for knaves.

The terms I use sound harshly, but the censure is just: and it will appear to be so in the highest degree, and upon the highest reason, if we stop to make a reflection or two, that deserve very well to be made, on the conduct of our Jacobites; for I desire no stronger instance on which to establish the censure, and to justify the terms I have used. Now all these, whether they swear or whether they do not, are liable to one particular objection, that did not lie against those who were, in former days, enemies to the king on the throne. In the days of York and Lancaster, for instance, a man might be against the prince on the throne, without being against the constitution of his country. The constitution conveyed the crown by hereditary right in the same family: and he who was a Yorkist, and he who was a Lancastrian, might, and I doubt not did, pretend in every contest to have this right on his side. The same constitution was acknowledged by both: and, therefore, so much indulgence was shown by law to both, at least in the time

time of Henry the seventh, that submission to a king "de facto" could not be imputed as a crime to either. Thus again, to descend lower in history; when the exclusion of the duke of York was pressed in the reign of Charles the second, the right of that prince to the crown was not disputed. His divine right indeed, such a divine right as his grandfather and father had asserted before him, was not much regarded; but his right by the constitution, his legal right, was sufficiently owned by those who insisted on a law as necessary to bar it. But every Jacobite, at this time, goes beyond all these examples, and is a rebel to the constitution under which he is born, as well as to the prince on the throne. The law of his country has settled the right of succession in a new family. He resists this law, and asserts, on his own private authority, not only a right in contradiction to it, but a right extinguished by it. This absurdity is so great that it cannot be defended, except by advancing a greater: and therefore it is urged, that no power on Earth could alter the constitution in this respect, nor extinguish a right to the crown inherent in the Stuart family, and derived from a superiour, that is, from a divine, authority. This kind of plea for refusing submission to the laws of the land, if it was admitted, would serve any purpose as well as that for which it is brought. Our fanaticks urged it formerly, and I do not see why a conscientious fifth monarchy-man had not as much right to urge it formerly, as a Jacobite has

has now. But if conscience, that is private opinion, may excuse the fifth monarchy-man and the Jacobite, who act conformably to it, from all imputations except those of madness and folly; how shall the latter be excused, when he forswears the principles he retains, acknowledges the right he renounces, takes oaths with an intent to violate them, and calls God to witness to a premeditated lie? Some casuistry has been employed to excuse these men to themselves and to others. But such casuistry, and in truth every other, destroys, by distinctions and exceptions, all morality, and effaces the essential difference between right and wrong, good and evil. This the schoolmen in general have done on many occasions; the sons of Loyola in particular: and I wish with all my heart, that nothing of the same kind could be objected to any other divines. Some political reasoning has been employed, as well as the casuistry here spoken of, and to the same purpose. It has been said, that the conduct of those who are enemies to the establishment, to which they submit and swear, is justified by the principles of the Revolution. But nothing can be more false and frivolous. By the principles of the Revolution, a subject may resist, no doubt, the prince who endeavours to ruin and enslave his people, and may push this resistance to the dethronement and exclusion of him and his race: but will it follow, that, because we may justly take arms against a prince whose right to govern we once acknowledged, and who by subsequent acts has forfeited

forfeited that right, we may swear to a right we do not acknowledge, and resist a prince whose conduct has not forfeited the right we swore to, nor given any just dispensation from our oaths?

But I shall lengthen this digression no further: it is on a subject I have treated in publick writings, the refutation of which never came to my hands, and, I think, never will. I return to the subject of my present discourse. And I say, that such factions as these can never create any obstruction to a prince who pursues the union of his subjects, nor disturb the peace of his government. The men who compose them must be desperate, and impotent; the most despicable of all characters, when they go together. Every honest and sensible man will distinguish himself out of their number: and they will remain, as they deserve to be, hewers of wood, and drawers of water, to the rest of their fellow-subjects.

They will remain such, if they are abandoned to themselves, and to that habitual infatuation which they have not sense and spirit enough to break. But if a prince, out of goodness or policy, should think it worth his while to take them from under this influence, and to break these habits; even this division, the most absurd of all others, will not be found incurable. A man who has not seen the inside of parties, nor had opportunities to examine nearly their secret motives, can hardly conceive how little a share principle of any sort, though principle of some sort or other be always pretended, has in the

the determination of their conduct. Reason has small effect on numbers. A turn of imagination, often as violent and as sudden as a gust of wind, determines their conduct: and passion is taken, by others, and by themselves too, when it grows into habit especially, for principle. What gave strength and spirit to a Jacobite party after the late king's accession? The true answer is, a sudden turn of the imaginations of a whole party to resentment and rage, that were turned a little before to quiet submission, and patient expectation. Principle had as little share in making the turn, as reason had in conducting it. Men who had sense, and temper too, before that moment, thought of nothing, after it, but of setting up a tory king against a whig king: and when some of them were asked, if they were sure a popish king would make a good tory king? or whether they were determined to sacrifice their religion and liberty to him? the answer was, No; that they would take arms against him if he made attempts on either; that this might be the case, perhaps, in six months after his restoration, but that, in the meantime, they would endeavour his restoration. This is no exaggerated fact: and I leave all men to judge, to what such sentiments and conduct must be ascribed, to principle or passion, to reason or madness? What gives obstinacy without strength, and sullenness without spirit, to the Jacobite-tories at this time? Another turn of imagination, or rather the same showing itself in another form; a factious habit, and a factious

factious notion, converted into a notion of policy and honour. They are taught to believe, that by clinging together they are a considerable weight, which may be thrown in to turn the scale in any great event; and that in the meantime, to be a steady suffering party is an honour they may flatter themselves with very justly. Thus, they continue steady to engagements, which most of them wish in their hearts they had never taken; and suffer for principles, in support of which not one of them would venture further, than talking the treason that claret inspires.

It results, therefore, from all that has been said, and from the reflections which these hints may suggest, that in whatever light we view the divided state of a people, there is none in which these divisions will appear incurable, nor a union of the members of a great community with one another, and with their head, unattainable. It may happen in this case as it does in many others, that things uncommon may pass for improbable or impossible: and, as nothing can be more uncommon than a Patriot King, there will be no room to wonder, if the natural and certain effects of his conduct should appear improbable or impossible to many. But there is still something more in this case. Though the union we speak of be so much for the interest of every king and every people, that their glory and their prosperity must increase, or diminish, in proportion as they approach nearer it, or are further removed from it; yet is there another interest, by which princes and

people

people both are often imposed upon so far, as to mistake it for their own. The interest I mean is that of private ambition. It would be easy to show in many instances, and particularly in this, of uniting instead of dividing, and of governing by a national concurrence instead of governing by the management of parties and factions in the state, how widely different, nay how repugnant the interests of private ambition and those of real patriotism are. Men, therefore, who are warmed by the first, and have no sense of the last, will declare for division, as they do for corruption, in opposition to union and to integrity of government. They will not indeed declare directly, that the two former are in the abstract preferable; but they will affirm, with great airs of sufficiency, that both are incurable; and conclude from hence, that in practice it is necessary to comply with both. This subterfuge once open, there is no false and immoral measure, in political management, which may not be avowed and recommended. But the very men, who hope to escape by opening it, shut it up again, and secure their own condemnation, when they labour to confirm divisions, and to propagate corruption, and thereby to create the very necessity, that they plead in their excuse. Necessity of this kind there is in reality none; for it seems full as absurd to say, that popular divisions must be cultivated, because popular union cannot be procured, as it would be to say that poison must be poured into a wound, because it cannot be healed.

The

The practice of morality, in private life, will never arrive at ideal perfection: must we give up ourselves, therefore, to all manner of immorality? and must those who are charged with our instruction endeavour to make us the most profligate of men, because they cannot make us saints?

Experience of the depravity of human nature made men desirous to unite in society and under government, that they might defend themselves the better against injuries: but the same depravity soon inspired to some the design of employing societies to invade and spoil societies; and to disturb the peace of the great commonwealth of mankind, with more force and effect in such collective bodies, than they could do individually. Just so it happens in the domestick œconomy of particular states: and their peace is disturbed by the same passions. Some of their members content themselves with the common benefits of society, and employ all their industry to promote the publick good: but some propose to themselves a separate interest; and, that they may pursue it the more effectually, they associate with others. Thus factions are in them, what nations are in the world; they invade and rob one another: and, while each pursues a separate interest, the common interest is sacrificed by them all: that of mankind in one case, that of some particular community in the other. This has been, and must always be, in some measure the course of human affairs, especially in free countries, where the passions of men are less restrained by authority: and I am not wild enough to suppose,

suppose, that a Patriot King can change human nature. But I am reasonable enough to suppose, that, without altering human nature, he may give a check to this course of human affairs, in his own kingdom at least; that he may defeat the designs and break the spirit of faction, instead of partaking in one, and assuming the other; and that, if he cannot render the union of his subjects universal, he may render it so general, as to answer all the ends of good government, private security, publick tranquillity, wealth, power, and fame.

If these ends were ever answered, they were so, surely, in this country in the days of our Elizabeth. She found her kingdoms full of factions, and factions of another consequence and danger than these of our days, whom she would have dispersed with a puff of her breath. She could not reunite them it is true: the papist continued a papist, the puritan a puritan; one furious, the other sullen. But she united the great body of the people in her and their common interest, she inflamed them with one national spirit: and, thus armed, she maintained tranquillity at home, and carried succour to her friends and terrour to her enemies abroad. There were cabals at her court, and intrigues among her ministers. It is said too, that she did not dislike that there should be such. But these were kept within her court. They could not creep abroad, to sow division among her people: and her greatest favourite, the earl of Essex, paid the price of attempting it with his head. Let

our

our great doctors in politicks, who preach so learnedly on the trite text "Divide et impera," compare the conduct of Elizabeth in this respect with that of her successor, who endeavoured to govern his kingdom by the notions of a faction that he raised, and to manage his parliament by undertakers: and they must be very obstinate indeed, if they refuse to acknowledge, that a wise and good prince can unite a divided people, though a weak and wicked prince cannot; and that the consequences of national union are glory and happiness to the prince and to the people; while those of disunion bring shame and misery on both, and entail them too on posterity.

I have dwelt long on the last head, not only because it is of great importance in itself, and at all times, but because it is rendered more so than ever at this time, by the unexampled avowal of contrary principles. Hitherto it has been thought the highest pitch of profligacy to own, instead of concealing, crimes; and to take pride in them, instead of being ashamed of them. But in our age men have soared to a pitch still higher. The first is common, it is the practice of numbers, and by their numbers they keep one another in countenance. But the choice spirits of these days, the men of mode in politicks, are far from stopping where criminals of all kinds have stopped, when they have gone even to this point; for generally the most hardened of the inhabitants of Newgate do not go so far. The men I speak of contend, that it is not enough to be vicious by practice and habit, but that

that it is necessary to be so by principle. They make themselves missionaries of faction as well as of corruption: they recommend both, they deride all such as imagine it possible, or fit, to retain truth, integrity, and a disinterested regard to the publick in publick life, and pronounce every man a fool, who is not ready to act like a knave. I hope that enough has been said, though much more might have been said, to expose the wickedness of these men, and the absurdity of their schemes; and to show that a Patriot King may walk more easily and successfully in other paths of government "per tutum planumque iter "religionis, justitiæ, honestatis, virtutumque mora-"lium." Let me proceed, therefore, to mention two other heads of the conduct, that such a king will hold, and it shall be my endeavour not to fall into the same prolixity.

A king who esteems it his duty to support, or to restore, if that be needful, the free constitution of a limited monarchy; who forms and maintains a wise and good administration; who subdues faction, and promotes the union of his people: and who makes their greatest good the constant object of his government, may be said, no doubt, to be in the true interest of his kingdom. All the particular cases, that can arise, are included in these general characteristicks of a wise and good reign. And yet it seems proper to mention, under a distinct head, some particular instances that have not been touched, wherein this wisdom and goodness will exert themselves.

Now

Now, though the true interest of several states may be the same in many respects, yet is there always some difference to be perceived, by a discerning eye, both in these interests, and in the manner of pursuing them; a difference that arises from the situation of countries, from the character of people, from the nature of government, and even from that of climate and soil; from circumstances that are, like these, permanent, and from others that may be deemed more accidental. To illustrate all this by examples, would be easy, but long. I shall content myself therefore to mention, in some instances only, the difference that arises, from the causes referred to, between the true interest of our country, and that of some or all our neighbours on the continent: and leave others to extend and apply in their own thoughts the comparison I shall hint at, rather than enlarge upon.

The situation of great Britain, the character of her people, and the nature of her government, fit her for trade and commerce. Her climate and her soil make them necessary to her well-being. By trade and commerce we grow a rich and powerful nation, and by their decay we are growing poor and impotent. As trade and commerce enrich, so they fortify, our country. The sea is our barrier, ships are our fortresses, and the mariners, that trade and commerce alone can furnish, are the garrisons to defend them. France lies under great disadvantages in trade and commerce, by the nature of her government. Her advantages

in situation, are as great at least as ours. Those that arise from the temper and character of her people are a little different perhaps, and yet upon the whole equivalent. Those of her climate and her soil are superiour to ours, and indeed to those of any European nation. The United Provinces have the same advantages that we have in the nature of their government, more perhaps in the temper and character of their people, less to be sure in their situation, climate, and soil. But, without descending into a longer detail of the advantages and disadvantages attending each of these nations in trade and commerce, it is sufficient for my present purpose to observe, that Great Britain stands in a certain middle between the other two, with regard to wealth and power arising from these springs. A less, and a less constant, application to the improvement of these may serve the ends of France; a greater is necessary in this country; and a greater still in Holland. The French may improve their natural wealth and power by the improvement of trade and commerce. We can have no wealth, nor power by consequence, as Europe is now constituted, without the improvement of them, nor in any degree but proportionably to this improvement. The Dutch cannot subsist without them. They bring wealth to other nations, and are necessary to the well-being of them; but they supply the Dutch with food and raiment, and are necessary even to their being.

The result of what has been said is, in general, that

that the wealth and power of all nations depending so much on their trade and commerce, and every nation being, like the three I have mentioned, in such different circumstances of advantage or disadvantage in the pursuit of this common interest; a good government, and therefore the government of a Patriot King, will be directed constantly to make the most of every advantage that nature has given, or art can procure, towards the improvement of trade and commerce. And this is one of the principal criterions by which we are to judge, whether governors are in the true interest of the people or not.

It results, in particular, that great Britain might improve her wealth and power in a proportion superiour to that of any nation who can be deemed her rival, if the advantages she has were as wisely cultivated, as they will be in the reign of a Patriot King. To be convinced more thoroughly of this truth, a very short process of reasoning will suffice. Let any man, who has knowledge enough for it, first compare the natural state of Great Britain, and of the United Provinces, and then their artificial state together; that is, let him consider minutely the advantages we have by the situation, extent, and nature of our island, over the inhabitants of a few salt marshes gained on the sea, and hardly defended from it: and after that, let him consider how nearly these provinces have raised themselves to an equality of wealth and power with the kingdom of Great Britain. From whence arises this difference of improve-

ment? It arises plainly from hence: the Dutch have been, from the foundation of their commonwealth, a nation of patriots and merchants. The spirit of that people has not been diverted from these two objects, the defence of their liberty, and the improvement of their trade and commerce: which have been carried on by them with uninterrupted and unslackened application, industry, order, and œconomy. In Great Britain the case has not been the same, in either respect; but here we confine ourselves to speak of the last alone.

Trade and commerce, such as they were in those days, had been sometimes, and in some instances, before the reign of Queen Elizabeth, encouraged and improved: but the great encouragements were given, the great extensions and improvements were made, by that glorious princess. To her we owe that spirit of domestick and foreign trade, which is not quite extinguished. It was she who gave that rapid motion to our whole mercantile system, which is not entirely ceased. They both flagged under her successor; were not revived under his son; were checked, diverted, clogged, and interrupted during our civil wars: and began to exert new vigor after the restoration, in a long course of peace; but met with new difficulties, too, from the confirmed rivalry of the Dutch, and the growing rivalry of the French. To one of these the pusillanimous character of James the first gave many scandalous occasions: and the other was favoured by the conduct

conduct of Charles the second, who never was in the true interest of the people he governed. From the revolution to the death of queen Anne, however trade and commerce might be aided and encouraged in other respects, they were necessarily subjected to depredations abroad, and overloaded by taxes at home, during the course of two great wars. From the accession of the late king to this hour, in the midst of a full peace, the debts of the nation continue much the same, the taxes have been increased, and for eighteen years of this time we have tamely suffered continual depredations from the most contemptible maritime power in Europe, that of Spain.

A Patriot King will neither neglect, nor sacrifice his country's interest. No other interest, neither a foreign nor a domestick, neither a publick nor a private, will influence his conduct in government. He will not multiply taxes wantonly, nor keep up those unnecessarily which necessity has laid, that he may keep up legions of tax-gatherers. He will not continue national debts, by all sorts of political and other profusion; nor, more wickedly still, by a settled purpose of oppressing and impoverishing the people; that he may with greater ease corrupt some, and govern the whole, according to the dictates of his passions and arbritary will. To give ease and encouragement to manufactory at home, to assist and protect trade abroad, to improve and keep in heart the national colonies, like so many farms of the mother country, will be principal and constant parts of the at-

tention of such a prince. The wealth of the nation he will most justly esteem to be his wealth, the power his power, the security and the honour, his security and honour; and, by the very means by which he promotes the two first, he will wisely preserve the two last: for by these means, and by these alone, can the great advantage of the situation of this kingdom be taken and improved.

Great Britain is an island: and, while nations on the continent are at immense charge in maintaining their barriers, and perpetually on their guard, and frequently embroiled, to extend or strengthen them, Great Britain may, if her governors please, accumulate wealth in maintaining hers; make herself secure from invasions, and be ready to invade others when her own immediate interest, or the general interest of Europe, requires it. Of all which queen Elizabeth's reign is a memorable example, and undeniable proof. I said the general interest of Europe; because it seems to me that this, alone, should call our councils off from an almost entire application to their domestick and proper business. Other nations must watch over every motion of their neighbours: penetrate, if they can, every design; foresee every minute event; and take part by some engagement or other in almost every conjuncture that arises. But as we cannot be easily nor suddenly attacked, and as we ought not to aim at any acquisition of territory on the continent, it may be our interest to watch the secret workings of the several councils abroad;

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to advise, and warn; to abet, and oppose; but it never can be our true interest easily and officiously to enter into action, much less into engagements that imply action and expense. Other nations, like the velites or light-armed troops, stand foremost in the field, and skirmish perpetually. When a great war begins, we ought to look on the powers of the continent, to whom we incline, like the two first lines, the principes and hastati of a Roman army: and on ourselves like the triarii, that are not to charge with these legions on every occasion, but to be ready for the conflict whenever the fortune of the day, be it sooner or later, calls us to it, and the sum of things, or the general interest, makes it necessary.

This is that post of advantage and honour, which our singular situation among the powers of Europe determines us, or should determine us, to take, in all disputes that happen on the continent. If we neglect it, and dissipate our strength on occasions that touch us remotely or indirectly, we are governed by men who do not know the true interest of this island, or who have some other interest more at heart. If we adhere to it, so at least as to deviate little and seldom from it, as we shall do whenever we are wisely and honestly governed, then will this nation make her proper figure: and a great one it will be. By a continual attention to improve her natural, that is her maritime strength, by collecting all her forces within herself, and reserving them to be laid out on

great occasions, such as regard her immediate interests and her honour, or such as are truly important to the general system of power in Europe; she may be the arbitrator of differences, the guardian of liberty, and the preserver of that balance, which has been so much talked of, and is so little understood.

"Are we never to be soldiers?" it will be said. Yes, constantly, in such proportion as is necessary for the defence of good government. To establish such a military force as none but bad governors can want, is to establish tyrannical power in the king or in the ministers; and may be wanted by the latter, when the former would be secure without his army, if he broke his minister. Occasionally too we must be soldiers, and for offence as well as defence; but in proportion to the nature of the conjuncture, considered always relatively to the difference here insisted upon between our situation, our interest, and the nature of our strength, compared with those of the other powers of Europe; and not in proportion to the desires, or even to the wants, of the nations with whom we are confederated. Like other amphibious animals, we must come occasionally on shore: but the water is more properly our element, and in it, like them, as we find our greatest security, so we exert our greatest force.

What I touch upon here, very shortly, deserves to be considered, and reconsidered, by every man who has, or may have, any share in the government of Great Britain. For we have not

only departed too much from our true national interest in this respect; but we have done so with the general applause even of well-meaning men, who did not discern that we wasted ourselves by an improper application of our strength in conjunctures, when we might have served the common cause far more usefully, nay with entire effect, by a proper application of our natural strength. There was something more than this. Armies grew so much into fashion, in time of war, among men who meant well to their country, that they who mean ill to it have kept, and keep them still up in the profoundest peace; and the number of our soldiers, in this island alone, is almost double to that of our seamen. That they are kept up against foreign enemies, cannot be said with any colour. If they are kept for show, they are ridiculous; if they are kept for any other purpose whatever, they are too dangerous to be suffered. A Patriot King, seconded by ministers attached to the true interest of their country, would soon reform this abuse, and save a great part of this expense; or apply it, in a manner preferable even to the saving it, to the maintenance of a body of marine foot, and to the charge of a register of thirty or forty thousand seamen. But no thoughts like these, no great designs for the honour and interest of the kingdom, will be entertained, till men who have this honour and interest at heart arise to power.

I come now to the last head under which I shall consider the character and conduct of a Patriot King: and

and let it not be thought to be of the least importance, though it may seem, at the first mention, to concern appearances rather than realities, and to be nothing more than a circumstance contained in or implied by the great parts of the character and conduct of such a king. It is of his personal behaviour, of his manner of living with other men, and, in a word, of his private as well as publick life, that I mean to speak. It is of that decency and grace, that bienseance of the French, that decorum of the Latins, that πρεπον of the Greeks, which can never be reflected on any character, that is not laid in virtue: but for want of which, a character that is so laid will lose, at all times, part of the lustre belonging to it, and may be sometimes not a little misunderstood and undervalued. Beauty is not separable from health, nor this lustre, said the Stoicks, from virtue: but as a man may be healthful without being handsome, so he may be virtuous without being amiable.

There are certain finishing strokes, a last hand as we commonly say, to be given to all the works of art. When that is not given, we may see the excellency of a general design, and the beauty of some particular parts. A judge of the art may see further; he may allow for what is wanting, and discern the full merit of a complete work in one that is imperfect. But vulgar eyes will not be so struck. The work will appear to them defective, because unfinished: so that without knowing precisely what they dislike, they may admire, but

but they will not be pleased. Thus in moral characters, though every part be virtuous and great, or though the few and small defects in it be concealed under the blaze of those shining qualities that compensate for them; yet is not this enough even in private life: it is less so in publick life, and still less so in that of a prince.

There is a certain "species liberalis," more easily understood than explained, and felt than defined, that must be acquired and rendered habitual to him. A certain propriety of words and actions, that results from their conformity to nature and character, must always accompany him, and create an air and manner, that run uniformly through the whole tenour of his conduct and behaviour: which air and manner are so far from any kind or degree of affectation, that they cannot be attained except by him who is void of all affectation. We may illustrate this to ourselves, and make it more sensible, by reflecting on the conduct of good dramatic or epick writers. They draw the characters, which they bring on the scene, from nature, they sustain them through the whole piece, and make their actors neither say nor do any thing that is not exactly proper to the character each of them represents. "Oderint "dum metuant," came properly out of the mouth of a tyrant; but Euripides would never have put that execrable sentence into the mouth of Minos or Æacus.

A man of sense and virtue both will not fall into any great impropriety of character, or indecency of

of conduct: but he may slide or be surprised into small ones, from a thousand reasons, and in a thousand manners, which I shall not stay to enumerate. Against these, therefore, even men, who are incapable of falling into the others must be still on their guard, and no men so much as princes. When their minds are filled and their hearts warmed with true notions of government, when they know their duty, and love their people, they will not fail in the great parts they are to act, in the council, in the field, and in all the ardous affairs that belong to their kingly office: at least they will not begin to fail, by failing in them. But as they are men susceptible of the same impressions, liable to the same errours, and exposed to the same passions, so they are likewise exposed to more and stronger temptations than others. Besides, the elevation in which they are placed, as it gives them great advantages, gives them great disadvantages too, that often countervail the former. Thus, for instance, a little merit in a prince is seen and felt by numbers, it is multiplied, as it were, and in proportion to this effect his reputation is raised by it. But then, a little failing is seen and felt by numbers too: it is multiplied in the same manner, and his reputation sinks in the same proportion.

I spoke above of defects, that may be concealed under the blaze of great and shining qualities. This may be the case: it has been that of some princes. There goes a tradition, that Henry the fourth of France asked a Spanish ambassador, what mis-

tresses

tresses the king of Spain had? The ambassador replied, like a formal pedant, that his master was a prince who feared God, and had no mistress but the queen. Henry the fourth felt the reflection, and asked him in return, with some contempt, "Whether his master had not virtues enough to "cover one vice?"

The faults or defects, that may be thus covered or compensated, are, I think, those of the man, rather than those of the king; such as arise from constitution, and the natural rather than the moral character; such as may be deemed accidental starts of passion, or accidental remissness in some unguarded hours; surprises, if I may say so, of the man on the king. When these happen seldom, and pass soon, they may be hid like spots in the sun: but they are spots still. He who has the means of seeing them, will see them: and he who has not, may feel the effects of them without knowing precisely the cause. When they continue (for here is the danger, because, if they continue, they will increase) they are spots no longer: they spread a general shade, and obscure the light in which they were drowned before. The virtues of the king are lost in the vices of the man.

Alexander had violent passions, and those for wine and women were predominant, after his ambition. They were spots in his character, before they prevailed by the force of habit: as soon as they began to do so, the king and the hero appeared less, the rake and bully more.

Persepolis

Persepolis was burnt at the instigation of Thais, and Clytus was killed in a drunken brawl. He repented indeed of these two horrible actions, and was again the king and hero upon many occasions; but he had not been enough on his guard, when the strongest incitements to vanity and to sensual pleasures offered themselves at every moment to him: and, when he stood in all his easy hours surrounded by women and eunuchs, by the pandars, parasites, and buffoons of a voluptuous court, they, who could not approach the king, approached the man, and by seducing the man, they betrayed the king. His faults became habits. The Macedonians, who did not or would not see the one, saw the other; and he fell a sacrifice to their resentments, to their fears, and to those factions, that will arise under an odious government, as well as under one that grows into contempt.

Other characters might be brought to contrast with this; the first Scipio Africanus, for example, or the eldest Cato: and there will be no objection to a comparison of such citizens of Rome, as these were, with kings of the first magnitude. Now the reputation of the first Scipio was not so clear and uncontroverted in private as in publick life; nor was he allowed by all, to be a man of such severe virtue, as he affected, and as that age required. Nævius was thought to mean him in some verses Gellius has preserved: and Valerius Antias made no scruple to assert, that, far from restoring the fair Spaniard to her family, he debauched and kept her. Notwithstanding this,

this, what authority did he not maintain? In what esteem and veneration did he not live and die? With what panegyricks has not the whole torrent of writers rolled down his reputation even to these days? This could not have happened, if the vice imputed to him had shown itself in any scandalous appearances, to eclipse the lustre of the general, the consul, or the citizen. The same reflection might be extended to Cato, who loved wine as well as Scipio loved women. Men did not judge in the days of the elder Cato perhaps, as Seneca was ready to do in those of the younger, that drunkenness could be no crime if Cato drank: but Cato's passion, as well as that of Scipio, was subdued and kept under by his publick character. His virtue warmed, instead of cooling, by this indulgence to his genius or natural temper: and one may gather, from what Tully puts into his mouth, in the treatise concerning Old Age, that even his love of wine was rendered subservient, instead of doing hurt, to the measures he pursued in his publick character.

Give me leave to insist a little on the two first Cæsars, and on Mark Antony. I quote none of them as good men, but I may quote them all as great men, and therefore properly in this place; since a Patriot King must avoid the defects that diminish a great character, as well as those that corrupt a good one. Old Curio called Julius Cæsar the husband of every wife, and the wife of every husband; referring to his known adulteries,

adulteries, and to the compliances that he was suspected of in his youth for Nicomedes. Even his own soldiers, in the licence of a triumph, sung lampoons on him for his profusion as well as lewdness. The youth of Augustus was defamed as much as that of Julius Cæsar, and both as much as that of Antony. When Rome was ransacked by the pandars of Augustus, and matrons and virgins were stripped and searched, like slaves in a market, to choose the fittest to satisfy his lust, did Antony do more? When Julius set no bounds to his debauches in Egypt, except those that satiety imposed, "postquam "epulis bacchoque modum lassata voluptas "imposuit," when he trifled away his time with Cleopatra in the very crisis of the civil war, and till his troops refused to follow him any further in his effeminate progress up the Nile—did Antony do more? No; all three had vices, which would have been so little borne in any former age of Rome, that no man could have raised himself, under the weight of them, to popularity and to power. But we must not wonder that the people, who bore the tyrants, bore the libertines: nor that indulgence was shown to the vices of the great, in a city where universal corruption and profligacy of manners were established: and yet even in this city, and among these degenerate Romans, certain it is, that different appearances, with the same vices, helped to maintain the Cæsars, and ruined Antony. I might produce many anecdotes to show how the two former saved appearances

pearances while their vices were the most flagrant, and made so much amends for the appearances they had not saved, by those of a contrary kind, that a great part at least of all which was said to defame them might pass, and did pass, for the calumny of party.

But Antony threw off all decorum from the first, and continued to do so to the last. Not only vice, but indecency became habitual to him. He ceased to be a general, a consul, a triumvir, a citizen of Rome. He became an Egyptian king, sunk into luxurious effeminacy, and proved he was unfit to govern men, by suffering himself to be governed by a woman. His vices hurt him, but his habits ruined him. If a political modesty at least had made him disguise the first, they would have hurt him less, and he might have escaped the last: but he was so little sensible of this, that in a fragment of one of his letters to Augustus, which Suetonius has preserved, he endeavours to justify himself by pleading this very habit. "What matter is it whom we lie "with?" says he: "this letter may find you per- "haps with Tertulla, or Terentilia," or others that he names. "I lie with Cleopatra, and "have I not done so these nine years?"

These great examples, which I have produced, not to encourage vice, but to show more strongly the advantages of decency in private behaviour, may appear in some sort figures bigger than the life. Few virtues and few vices grow up, in these parts of the world and these latter ages, to

the size of those I have mentioned; and none have such scenes wherein to exert themselves. But the truths I am desirous to inculcate will be as justly delivered in this manner, and perhaps more strongly felt. Failings or vices that flow from the same source of human nature, that run the same course through the conduct of princes, and have the same effects on their characters, and consequently on their government and their fortune, have all the proportion necessary to my application of them. It matters little, whether a prince, who abandons that common decorum which results from nature and which reason prescribes, abandons the particular decorums of this country or that, of this age or that, which result from mode, and which custom exacts. It matters little, for instance, whether a prince gives himself up to the more gross luxury of the west, or to the more refined luxury of the east; whether he become the slave of a domestick harlot, or of a foreign queen; in short, whether he forget himself in the arms of one whore or of twenty; and whether he imitate Antony, or a king of Achin, who is reported to have passed his whole time in a seraglio, eating, drinking, chewing betel, playing with women, and talking of cockfighting.

To sum up the whole, and draw to a conclusion: this decency, this grace, this propriety of manners to character, is so essential to princes in particular, that whenever it is neglected, their virtues lose a great degree of lustre, and their defect

defects acquire much aggravation. Nay more; by neglecting this decency and this grace, and for want of a sufficient regard to appearances, even their virtues may betray them into failings, their failings into vices, and their vices into habits unworthy of princes and unworthy of men.

The constitutions of governments, and the different tempers and characters of people, may be thought justly to deserve some consideration, in determining the behaviour of princes in private life as well as in publick; and to put a difference, for instance, between the decorum of a king of France and that of a king of Great Britain.

Lewis the fourteenth was king in an absolute monarchy, and reigned over a people, whose genius makes it as fit perhaps to impose on them by admiration and awe, as to gain and hold them by affection. Accordingly he kept great state; was haughty, was reserved; and all he said or did appeared to be forethought and planned. His regard to appearances was such, that when his mistress was the wife of another man, and he had children by her every year, he endeavoured to cover her constant residence at court by a place she filled about the queen: and he dined and supped and cohabited with the latter in every apparent respect as if he had had no mistress at all. Thus he raised a great reputation; he was revered by his subjects, and admired by his neighbours: and this was due principally to the art with which he managed appearances, so as to set off his virtues, to disguise his failings and

his vices, and by his example and authority to keep a veil drawn over the futility and debauch of his court.

His successor, not to the throne, but to the sovereign power, was a mere rake, with some wit, and no morals; nay, with so little regard to them, that he made them a subject of ridicule in discourse, and appeared in his whole conduct more profligate, if that could be, than he was in principle. The difference between these characters soon appeared in abominable effects; such as, cruelty apart, might recal the memory of Nero, or, in the other sex, that of Messalina, and such as I leave the chroniclers of scandal to relate.

Our Elizabeth was queen in a limited monarchy, and reigned over a people at all times more easily led than driven; and at that time capable of being attached to their prince and their country, by a more generous principle than any of those which prevail in our days, by affection. There was a strong prerogative then in being, and the crown was in possession of greater legal power. Popularity was, however, then, as it is now, and as it must be always in mixed government, the sole true foundation of that sufficient authority and influence, which other constitutions give the prince gratis, and independently of the people, but which a king of this nation must acquire. The wise queen saw it, and she saw too, how much popularity depends on those appearances, that depend on the decorum, the decency, the grace, and the propriety of behaviour of which we are

speaking.

speaking. A warm concern for the interest and honour of the nation, a tenderness for her people, and a confidence in their affections, were appearances that ran through her whole publick conduct, and gave life and colour to it. She did great things, and she knew how to set them off according to their full value, by her manner of doing them. In her private behaviour she showed great affability, she descended even to familiarity; but her familiarity was such as could not be imputed to her weakness, and was, therefore, most justly ascribed to her goodness. Though a woman, she hid all that was womanish about her: and if a few equivocal marks of coquetry appeared on some occasions, they passed like flashes of lightning, vanished as soon as they were discerned, and imprinted no blot on her character. She had private friendships, she had favourites: but she never suffered her friends to forget she was their queen; and when her favourites did, she made them feel that she was so.

Her successor had no virtues to set off, but he had failings and vices to conceal. He could not conceal the latter; and void of the former, he could not compensate for them. His failings and his vices therefore standing in full view, he passed for a weak prince and an ill man; and fell into all the contempt wherein his memory remains to this day. The methods he took, to preserve himself from it, served but to confirm him in it. No man can keep the decorum of man-

forget that they are kings. The sentiments which one of these reflections of course inspires, will give a humane and affable air to their whole behaviour, and make them taste in that high elevation all the joys of social life. The sentiments, that the other reflection suggests, will be found very compatible with the former: and they may never forget that they are kings, though they do not always carry the crown on their heads, nor the sceptre in their hands. Vanity and folly must entrench themselves in a constant affectation of state, to preserve regal dignity: a wise prince will know how to preserve it when he lays his majesty aside. He will dare to appear a private man, and in that character he will draw to himself a respect less ostentatious, but more real and more pleasing to him, than any which is paid to the monarch. By never saying what is unfit for him to say, he will never hear what is unfit for him to hear. By never doing what is unfit for him to do, he will never see what is unfit for him to see. Decency and propriety of manners are so far from lessening the pleasures of life, that they refine them, and give them a higher taste: they are so far from restraining the free and easy commerce of social life, that they banish the bane of it, licentiousness of behaviour. Ceremony is the barrier against this abuse of liberty in publick; politeness and decency are so in private: and the prince, who practises and exacts them, will amuse himself much better,

and oblige those, who have the honour to be in his intimacy and to share his pleasures with him, much more, than he could possibly do by the most absolute and unguarded familiarity.

That which is here recommended to princes, that constant guard on their own behaviour even in private life, and that constant decorum which their example ought to exact from others, will not be found so difficult in practice as may be imagined; if they use a proper discernment in the choice of the persons whom they admit to the nearest degrees of intimacy with them. A prince should choose his companions with as great care as his ministers. If he trusts the business of his state to these, he trusts his character to those: and his character will depend on theirs much more than is commonly thought. General experience will lead men to judge, that a similitude of character determined the choice; even when chance, indulgence to assiduity, good-nature, or want of reflection, had their share in the introduction of men unworthy of such favour. But in such cases certain it is, that they, who judged wrong at first concerning him, will judge right at last. He is not a trifler, for instance. Be it so: but if he takes trifling futile creatures, men of mean characters, or of no character, into his intimacy, he shows a disposition to become such; and will become such unless he breaks these habits early, and before puerile amusements are grown up to be the

business

business of his life. I mean, that the minds of princes, like the minds of other men, will be brought down insensibly to the tone of the company they keep.

A worse consequence, even than this, may follow a want of discernment in princes how to choose their companions, and how to conduct themselves in private life. Silly kings have resigned themselves to their ministers, have suffered these to stand between them and their people, and have formed no judgments, nor taken any measures on their own knowledge, but all implicitly on the representations made to them by their ministers. Kings of superiour capacity have resigned themselves in the same manner to their favourites, male and female, have suffered these to stand between them and their most able and faithful councellors: their judgments have been influenced, and their measures directed by insinuations of women, or of men as little fitted as women, by nature and education, to be hearkened to, in the great affairs of government. History is full of such examples; all melancholy, many tragical! sufficient, one would imagine, to deter princes, if attended to, from permitting the companions of their idle hours, or the instruments of their pleasures, to exceed the bounds of those provinces. Should a minister of state pretend to vie with any of these, about the forms of a drawing-room, the regulation of a ruelle, the decoration of a ball, or the

the dress of a fine lady, he would be thought ridiculous, and he would be truly so. But then are not any of these impertinent, when they presume to meddle in things at least as much above them, as those that have been mentioned are below the others? And are not princes, who suffer them to do so, unaccountably weak?

What shall I say further on this head? Nothing more is necessary. Let me wind it up, therefore, by asserting this great truth, that results from what has been already said: As he can never fill the character of a Patriot King, though his personal great and good qualities be in every other respect equal to it, who lies open to the flattery of courtiers, to the seduction of women, and to the partialities and affections which are easily contracted by too great indulgence in private life; so the prince, who is desirous to establish this character, must observe such a decorum, and keep such a guard on himself, as may prevent even the suspicion of being liable to such influences. For as the reality would ruin, the very suspicion will lessen him in the opinion of mankind: and the opinion of mankind, which is fame after death, is superiour strength and power in life.

And now, if the principles and measures of conduct, laid down in this discourse, as necessary to constitute that greatest and most glorious of human beings, a Patriot King, be sufficient to this purpose; let us consider, too, how easy it is,

or

or ought to be, to establish them in the minds of princes. They are founded on true propositions, all of which are obvious, nay, many of them self-evident. They are confirmed by universal experience. In a word, no understanding can resist them, and none but the weakest can fail, or be misled, in the application of them. To a prince, whose heart is corrupt, it is in vain to speak: and, for such a prince, I would not be thought to write. But if the heart of a prince be not corrupt, these truths will find an easy ingression, through the understanding, to it. Let us consider again what the sure, the necessary effects of such principles and measures of conduct must be, to the prince, and to the people. On this subject let the imagination range through the whole glorious scene of a patriot reign: the beauty of the idea will inspire those transports, which Plato imagined the vision of Virtue would inspire, if Virtue could be seen. What in truth can be so lovely, what so venerable, as to contemplate a king, on whom the eyes of a whole people are fixed, filled with admiration, and glowing with affection? A king, in the temper of whose government, like that of Nerva, things so seldom allied as empire and liberty are intimately mixed, coexist together inseparably, and constitute one real essence? What spectacle can be presented to the view of the mind so rare, so nearly divine, as a king possessed of absolute power, neither usurped by fraud, nor maintained by force, but the

the genuine effect of esteem, of confidence, and affection; the free gift of liberty, who finds her greatest security in this power, and would desire no other if the prince on the throne could be, what his people wish him to be, immortal? Of such a prince, and of such a prince alone, it may be said with strict propriety and truth,

" Volentes
" Per populos dat jura, viamque affectat Olympo."

Civil fury will have no place in this draught: or if the monster is seen, he must be seen as Virgil describes him,

" Centum vinctus ahenis
" Post tergum nodis, fremit horridus ore cruento."

He must be seen subdued, bound, chained, and deprived entirely of power to do hurt. In his place, concord will appear, brooding peace and prosperity on the happy land; joy sitting in every face, content in every heart; a people unoppressed, undisturbed, unalarmed; busy to improve their private property and the publick stock; fleets covering the ocean, bringing home wealth by the returns of industry, carrying assistance or terrour abroad by the direction of wisdom, and asserting triumphantly the right and the honour of Great Britain, as far as waters roll and as winds can waft them.

Those who live to see such happy days, and to act in so glorious a scene, will perhaps call to mind, with some tenderness of sentiment, when

when he is no more, a man, who contributed his mite to carry on so good a work, and who desired life for nothing so much, as to see a king of Great Britain the most popular man in his country, and a Patriot King at the head of a united people.

OF THE

STATE OF PARTIES

AT THE

ACCESSION OF KING GEORGE THE FIRST.

(Written 1749)

I PERCEIVE by yours, that my discourse of the character and conduct of a Patriot King, in that article which relates to party, has not entirely satisfied your expectations. You expected, from some things that I remember to have said to you in conversation, and others that have fallen on that occasion from my pen, a more particular application of those general reasonings to the present time, and to the state of parties from the late king's accession to the throne. The subject is delicate enough, and yet I shall speak upon it what truth exacts from me with the utmost frankness: for I know all our parties too well, to esteem any; and I am too old, and too resigned to my fate, to want, or to fear any.

Whatever anecdotes you have been told, for you

you are too young to have seen the passages of the times I am going to mention, and whatever prepossessions you have had, take these facts for undoubted truths: That there was no design on foot, during the four last years of queen Anne's reign, to set aside the succession of the house of Hanover, and to place the crown on the head of the pretender to it; nor any party formed for this purpose at the time of the death of that princess, whose memory I honour, and therefore feel a just indignation at the irreverence with which we have seen it treated. If such a design had been on foot, during that time there were moments when the execution of it would not have been difficult, or dangerous enough, to have stopped men of the most moderate resolution. Neither could a design of that nature have been carried on so long, though it was not carried into execution, without leaving some traces, which would have appeared when such strict inquisitions were made; when the papers of so many of the queen's servants were seized, and even her own papers, even those she had sealed up to be burnt after her death, were exposed to so much indecent inspection. But, laying aside all arguments of the probable kind, I deny the fact absolutely: and I have the better title to expect credit, because it could not be true without my knowledge, or at least suspicion of it; and because even they who believed it, for all who asserted it did not it believe, had no proof to produce,

produce, nor have to this hour, but vain surmises; nor any authority to rest upon, but the clamour of party.

That there were particular men, who corresponded indirectly, and directly too, with the pretender, and with others for his service; that these men professed themselves to be zealous in it, and made large promises, and raised some faint hopes, I cannot doubt: though this was unknown to me at that time, or at least I knew it not with the same certainty, and in the same detail, that I have known it since. But if this was done by some who were in the queen's service, it was done too by some who were out of it, and, I think, with little sincerity by either.

It may well seem strange to one who carries in his breast a heart like yours, that men of any rank, and especially of the highest, should hold a conduct so false, so dangerous, always of uncertain event, and often, as it was in the case here mentioned, upon remote contingencies, and such as they themselves think the least probable. Even I think it strange, who have been much longer mingled in a corrupt world, and who have seen many more examples of the folly, of the cunning, and the perfidy of mankind. A great regard to wealth, and a total contempt of virtue, are sentiments very nearly allied: and they must possess the whole souls of men whom they can determine to such infamous duplicity, to such double treachery. In fact they do so. One is so afraid of losing his fortune, that he lays

in claims to secure it, perhaps to augment it, on all sides, and to prevent even imaginary dangers. Another values so little the inward testimony of a good conscience, or the future reproaches of those he has deceived, that he scruples not to take engagements, for a time to come, that he has no design to keep; if they may serve as expedients to facilitate, in any small degree, the success of an immediate project. All this was done at the time, on the occasion, and by the persons I intend. But the scheme of defeating the protestant succession was so far from being laid by the queen and her ministers, and such a resolution was so far from being taken, that the very men I speak of, when they were pressed by the other side, that is from Versailles and St. Germains, to be more particular, and to come into a closer concert, declined both, and gave the most evasive answers.

A little before, or about, the time of the queen's death, some other persons, who figured afterwards in the rebellion, entered in good earnest into those engagements, as I believe; for I do not know exactly the date of them. But whenever they took them, they took them as single men. They could answer for no party to back them. They might flatter themselves with hopes and dreams like Pompey, if little men and little things may be compared with great, of legions ready to rise at the stamp of their feet. But they had no assurance, no nor grounds to expect any troops, except those of the Highlands; whose disposition

disposition in general was known to every man, but whose insurrection, without the concurrence of other insurrections and other troops, was deemed, even by those that made them take arms afterward, not a strength but a weakness; ruin to the poor people, and ruin to the cause. In a word, these men were so truly single in their engagements, and their measures were so unripe for action, when the resolution of acting immediately was taken by them, that, I am persuaded, they durst not communicate their design to any one man of consequence that served at that time with them. What persuades me of it is this. One man, whom they thought likely to incline to them on several accounts, they attempted indirectly and at a great distance: they came no nearer to the point with him, neither then, that is just before the queen's death, nor afterward. They had indeed no encouragement to do it; for, upon this hint, and another circumstance which fell in, both he and others took several occasions to declare, that though they would serve the queen faithfully, and exclusively of all other regards or engagements, to her last breath, yet after her decease they would acknowledge the prince on whom the succession devolved by law, and to which they had sworn, and no other. This declaration would have been that of the far greatest number of the same party, and would have been stuck to by them, if the passions and private interests of another party had not prevailed over the true interest of a new family that was going to mount the throne.

You may ask me now, and the question will not be at all improper, How it came to pass, if the queen and her ministers had no design to defeat the succession, that so much suspicion of it prevailed, that so great an alarm was taken, and so great a clamour raised? I might answer you very shortly and very truly, By the strange conduct of a first minister, by the contests about the negociations of the peace, and by the arts of a party.

The minds of some ministers are like the "sanc- "tum sanctorum" of a temple I have read of somewhere: before it a great curtain was solemnly drawn; within it nothing was to be seen but a confused groupe of misshapen, and imperfect forms, heads without bodies, bodies without heads, and the like. To develope the most complicated cases, and to decide in the most doubtful, has been the talent of great ministers: it is that of others to perplex the most simple, and to be puzzled by the plainest. No man was more desirous of power than the minister here intended, and he had a competent share of cunning to wriggle himself into it; but then his part was over, and no man was more at a loss how to employ it. The ends, he proposed to himself, he saw for the most part darkly and indistinctly; and if he saw them a little better, he still made use of means disproportionate to them. That private correspondence with the queen, which produced the change of the ministry in 1710, was begun with him while he was secretary of state, and was continued, through him, during the two years that intervened

intervened between his leaving the court, and his return to it. This gave him the sole confidence of the queen, put him more absolutely at the head of the party that came into power, and invested him with all the authority that a first minister could have in those days, and before any man could presume to rival, in that rank, and in this kingdom, the rank of the ancient mayors of the palace in France. The tories, with whom and by whom he had risen, expected much from him. Their expectations were ill answered: and I think that such management as he employed would not have hindered them long from breaking from him, if new things had not fallen in, to engage their whole attention, and to divert their passions.

The foolish prosecution of Sacheverel had carried party-rage to the heighth, and the late change of the ministry had confirmed it there. These circumstances, and many others relative to them, which I omit, would have made it impossible, if there had been honesty and wisdom enough to desire it, to bring about a coalition of the bulk of the tories and whigs at the latter end of this reign: as it had been brought about a few years before under the administration of my lord Marlborough and my lord Godolphin, who broke it soon, and before it had time to cement, by making such a use of it as I am unable to account for, even at this hour. The two parties were in truth become factions in the strict sense of the word. I was of one, and I own the

guilt; which no man of the other would have a good grace to deny. In this respect they were alike; but here was the difference: one was well united, well conducted, and determined to their future, as well as their present objects. Not one of these advantages attended the other. The minister had evidently no bottom to rest his administration upon, but that of the party at the head of which he came into power: if he had rested it there, if he had gained their confidence, instead of creating, even wantonly, if I may say so, a distrust of himself in them, it is certain he might have determined them to every national interest during the queen's time, and after her death. But this was above his conception as well as his talents. He meant to keep power as long as he could, by the little arts by which he had got into it: he thought that he should be able to compound for himself in all events, and cared little what became of his party, his mistress, or the nation. That this was the whole of his scheme, appeared sufficiently in the course of his administration; was then seen by some; and has been since acknowledged by all people. For this purpose he coaxed and persecuted whigs; he flattered and disappointed tories; and supported, by a thousand little tricks, his tottering administration. To the tory party he held out the peace, as an æra when all they expected should be done for them, and when they should be placed in such fulness of power and such strength of party, "that it would "be more the interest of the successor to be well

"well with them, than theirs to be well with "him." Such expressions were often used, and others of like import: and, I believe, these oracular speeches were interpreted, as oracles used to be, according as every man's inclinations led him.

The contests that soon followed, by the violent opposition to the negotiations of peace, did the good hinted at above to the minister, and enabled him to amuse and banter his party a little longer. But they did great, and, in some respects, irreparable, mischief to Great Britain, and to all Europe. One part of the mischief they did at home is proper to be mentioned here. They dipped the house of Hanover in our party-quarrels, unseasonably, I presume to think, and impopularly; for though the contest was maintained by two parties, that pretended equally to have the national interest at heart, yet the national interest was so plainly on one side of the question, and the other side was so plainly partial, at the expense of this interest, to the emperor, the princes of the empire, and our other allies, that a successor to the crown, who was himself a prince of Germany, should have preserved, in good policy, for this very reason, the appearance at least of some neutrality. The means employed openly to break the queen's measures were indecent and unjustifiable: those employed secretly, and meditated to be employed, were worse. The ministers of Hanover, whose conduct I may censure the more freely because the late king did not approve it all, took so remarkable a share in

the first, that they might be, and they were, suspected of having some in the others. This had a very bad effect, which was improved by men in the two extremes. The whigs desired nothing more than to have it thought, that the successor was theirs, if I may repeat an insolent expression which was used at that time: the notion did them honour, and, though it could give no colour, it gave some strength, to their opposition. The Jacobites insinuated industriously the same thing; and represented that the establishment of the house of Hanover would be the establishment of the whig party, and that the interests of Great Britain would be constantly sacrificed to foreign interests, and her wealth drained to support them under that family. I leave you to judge what ingression such exaggerations must find, on such occasion, and in such a ferment. I do not think they determined men to Jacobitism. I know they did not; but I know that they disinclined men from the succession, and made many, who resolved to submit to it, submit to it rather as a necessary evil, than as an eligible good.

This was, to the best of my observation, and knowledge, the state of one party. An absurd one it was, and the consequences of it were foreseen, foretold, and pressed upon the minister at the time, but always without effect, and sometimes without any answers. He had some private intrigué for himself at Hanover: so he had at Bar. He was the bubble of one in the end: the pretender was so of the other. But his whole management in the mean time was contrived to

keep up a kind of general indetermination in the party about the succession; which made a man of great temper once say to him with passion, that "he believed no other minister, at the head "of a powerful party, would not be better at "Hanover, if he did not mean to be worse "there."

The state of the other party was this. The whigs had appeared zealous for the protestant succession from the time when king William proposed it, after the death of the duke of Gloucester. The tories voted for it then; and the acts that were judged necessary to secure it, some of them at least, were promoted by them: Yet were they not thought, nor did they affect, as the others did, to be thought, extremely fond of it. King William did not come into this measure, till he found, upon trial, that there was no other safe and practicable: and the tories had an air of coming into it for no other reason. Beside which, it is certain, that there was at that time a much greater leaven of Jacobitism in the tory-lump, than at the time spoken of here.

Now, thus far the whigs acted like a national party, who thought that their religion and liberty could be secured by no other expedient, and therefore adhered to this settlement of the crown with distinguished zeal. But this national party degenerated soon into faction; that is, the national interest became soon a secondary and subservient motive, and the cause of the succession was supported more for the sake of the party or faction, than for the sake of the nation; and with views

views that went more directly to the establishment of their own administration, than to a solid settlement of the present royal family. This appeared, evidently enough, to those whom noise and show could not impose upon, in the latter end of the queen's reign, and plain beyond dispute to all mankind, after her decease. The art of the whigs was to blend, as undistinguishably as they could, all their party-interests with those of the succession: and they made just the same factious use of the supposed danger of it, as the tories had endeavoured to make, some time before, of the supposed danger of the church. As no man is reputed a friend to christianity beyond the Alps and the Pyrenees, who does not acknowledge the papal supremacy, so here no man was to be reputed a friend to the protestant succession, who was not ready to acknowledge their supremacy. The interest of the present royal family was, to succeed without opposition and risque, and to come to the throne in a calm. It was the interest of a faction, that they should come to it in a storm. Accordingly the whigs were very near putting in execution some of the wildest projects of insurrections and rebellion, under pretence of securing what there was not sufficient disposition, nor any preparation at all made to obstruct. Happily for the publick these designs proved abortive. They were too well known to have succeeded; but they might have had, and they would have had, most fatal consequences. The storm, that was not raised to disturb and endanger the late king's accession, was only deferred.

To

To a party, who meant nothing less than engrossing the whole power of the government and the whole wealth of the nation under the successor, a storm, in which every other man should be driven from him, was too necessary, not to be conjured up at any rate; and it was so immediately after the late king's accession. He came to the throne easily and quietly, and took possession of the kingdom with as little trouble, as he could have expected if he had been not only the queen's successor, but her son. The whole nation submitted cheerfully to his government, and the queen's servants discharged the duty of their offices, while he continued them in their offices, in such a manner as to merit his approbation. This was signified to some of them, to the secretaries in particular, in the strongest terms, and according to his majesty's express order, before the whole council of state. He might I think, I thought then that he ought, and every man, except the earl of O----d, who believed, or had a mind to make others believe, that his influence would be great in the new reign, expected, that he would have given his principal confidence and the principal power of the administration to the whigs: but it was scarce possible to expect, that he would immediately let loose the whole fury of party, suffer the queen's servants, who had surely been guilty of no crime against him, nor the state, to be so bitterly persecuted; and proscribe in effect every man in the country, who did not bear the name of whig.

Princes

Princes have often forgot, on their accession to a throne, even personal injuries received in party quarrels: and the saying of Lewis the twelfth of France, in answer to those who would have persuaded him to show severity to la Tremouille, is very deservedly famous. "God forbid," said he, "that Lewis the twelfth should revenge "the quarrels of the duke of Orleans." Other princes, who have fought their way to the throne, have not only exercised clemency, but shown favour to those who had stood in arms against them; and here again I might quote the example of another king of France, that of Henry the fourth. But to take an example in our own country, look back to the restoration, consider all that passed from the year 1641 to the year 1660, and then compare the measures that king Charles the second was advised to pursue, for the establishment of his government, in the circumstances of that time, with those which the late king was advised, and prevailed on, against his opinion, inclination, and first resolution, to pursue, in the circumstances I have just mentioned. I leave the conclusion to the candour and good sense of every impartial reader.

To these measures of unexpected violence alone it must be ascribed, that the pretender had any party for him of strength sufficient to appear and act. These measures, alone, produced the troubles that followed, and dyed the royal ermines of a prince, no way sanguinary, in blood.

blood. I am far from excusing one party, for suffering another to drive them into rebellion. I wish I could forget it myself. But there are two observations on that event, which I cannot refuse myself to make. One is, that the very manner, in which this rebellion was begun, shows abundantly that it was a start of passion, a sudden phrensy of men transported by their resentment, and nothing less than the execution of a design long premeditated and prepared. The other is, that few examples are to be found in history, perhaps none, of what happened on this occasion, when the same men, in the same country, and in the compass of the same year, were ready to rise in arms against one prince without any national cause; and then provoked, by the violence of their councils, the opposite faction to rise in actual rebellion against the successor.

These are some of the effects of maintaining divisions in a nation, and of governing by faction. I might descend into a detail of many fatal consequences that have followed, from the first false step which was taken, when the present settlement was so avowedly made on the narrow bottom of party. But I consider that this discourse is growing into length; that I have had, and shall have occasion to mention some of these consequences elsewhere; and that your own reflections on what has been said will more than supply what I omit to say in this place. Let me therefore conclude by repeating, that division has caused

caused all the mischief we lament, that union can alone retrieve it, and that a great advance toward this union was the coalition of parties, so happily begun, so successfully carried on, and of late so unaccountably neglected, to say no worse. But let me add, that this union can never be complete, till it become a union of the head with the members, as well as of the members with one another: and that such a union can never be expected, till patriotism fills the throne, and faction be banished from the administration.

SOME

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

PRESENT STATE of the NATION,

PRINCIPALLY WITH REGARD TO

HER TAXES AND HER DEBTS,

And on the Causes and Consequences of them.

Written 1749

" Mihi autem non minori curæ est qualis respublica post
" mortem meam futura sit, quam qualis hodiè sit."
Cic. in. Læl.

SINCE we have got out of a war the least successful, and the most expensive, that this nation ever made; after having taken part threescore years together, like principal actors, in all the other wars and all the negotiations of the continent; it is time surely, that we recal our attention homewards, and consider the present state of our own country, particularly with respect to her taxes and her debts, to the nature and application of the former, to the rise and progress of the latter, to the necessity and to the means of diminishing both.

[Mr Knight says, this first production of B's brilliant pen was the result of his views on the treaty of Aix la Chapelle, which was written 1749

The

The revolution of our government in one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight makes a most remarkable æra in the history of Britain on many accounts, and on none more than on that which is the subject of these papers. The publick revenue, in net money, amounted at that time to no more than two millions annually, which were sufficient to defray the ordinary expenses of the crown, as well as to maintain a fleet, and a greater army than was necessary for the defence of the country at that time. This revenue was raised without any tax on land or malt, and by a very few of those innumerable duties, which have been since laid, to the oppression of the landed and mercantile interest of the nation. These duties have been so mortgaged too, that we are unable, at this time, to send a cockboat to sea, or to keep a single centinel at Whitehall gate, without a land-tax.

The publick debts, that of the bankers included, amounted to little more than £. 300000 at the beginning of this æra. They amount now to fourscore millions. To discover how this great change in our national circumstances has been brought about is surely an object of reasonable, and may be such of useful, curiosity.

King William engaged in a necessary war with France, as soon as he came to the throne. It was necessary, that he should maintain the revolution he had made, and assert his right to the crown, he had acquired by the best of all titles, the free gift of a people whom he had delivered from impending destruction, from popery and slavery.

This

This war might be thought necessary too in another respect.

From the treaty of Westphalia, and from the Pyrenean, to the accession of king William to our throne, the power and ambition of France had grown up together, and were become exorbitant. No efforts had been made sufficient to reduce, scarce any sufficient to resist, the former. No measures had been concerted, no preparations had been made, to disappoint the latter in that great object, the acquisition of the Spanish monarchy to the house of Bourbon. From the revolution this alarm was taken, which should have been taken sooner. The spirit of our court was changed, the eyes of our people were opened, and all men saw how necessary it was to preserve, in concert with the Spaniards, the succession of their monarchy to the house of Austria, instead of suffering it to fall into that of Bourbon, which was excluded from it by the most solemn engagements.

Queen Anne came to the throne at the eve of another great war, of a war against France and Spain, which her predecessor was ready to undertake, though he had not actually declared it when he died, in order to procure some reasonable satisfaction to the emperour, for a succession which had been then lost to his family by his own fault.

King William, who engaged for so much more in the first grand alliance, would engage for no more than this in the second. But the private

interest of her ministers, the intrigues of her allies, and the rashness of a party, drew the queen much further: and it must be confessed that a subserviency to the court of Vienna, which has cost us so dear, began in her time, not in king William's, though her heart was, what she declared it to be, entirely English, and though he was censured, I think very unjustly, for too great regard to foreign interests, and too little for those of Britain.

The war king William waged was not very successful; and yet if the emperour would have consented to send his second son into Spain during the life of Charles the second, king William would have succeeded in both the objects of this war. He had maintained himself on the throne, and had obliged France to promise, that she would not disturb him in the possession of it. As to the other object, no treaties of partition would have been thought necessary by him in that case; neither would this nation have had any thing more to do, when the Spanish succession was open, than to support, with the concurrence of that whole nation, an Austrian prince who was actually on the spot with an Austrian army, and who had been already declared presumptive heir. Thus we might have had a defensive war to make with great advantages on our side; and the events of the offensive war, which we were obliged to make afterward, show sufficiently what would have been the success of the other. The councils of Vienna laid us wantonly, if I may say so, under great dis-

advantages: and king William therefore resolved, like a wise prince, to expose neither this country nor his own to the hard task of recovering the whole Spanish monarchy out of the hands of Philip. He accommodated his system to the circumstances of the time; and aimed at no more now, than to force the French and Spaniards to come into some composition about the Austrian pretensions, about trade, about barriers, and about effectual means to hinder a future union of France and Spain under one monarch.

This was all that he meaned. But they who delighted in war, because they hoped to get immensely by it, and they who amused themselves and others with vain speculations, about a thing very real in itself, about a balance of power, ensnared both England and Holland into engagements for dethroning Philip and setting up Charles in his room, though we had acknowledged the former, though the Castilians were strongly attached to him, and though he was in quiet possession of the Spanish dominions in both hemispheres. Flattered by groundless hopes of a revolution in favour of his rival, and flushed by the first success of our arms, this precipitate engagement was approved and supported by us, notwithstanding the absurd conduct of the emperour and the wise reserve of king William, both of which should have put us more on our guard, and have made us less sanguine.

It is perhaps worth while to make an obser-

vation in this place, which was made at the time we speak of by Spaniards who acknowledged Philip the fifth, in compliance with the will of Charles the second, and yet were averse to the influence and authority which France assumed over them. They observed that Cromwell had forced them to give their infanta to Lewis the fourteenth, by joining his arms with those of France against them, and that we went about to force them, half a century afterward, by a new war, to an absolute dependance on France.

The court of Vienna, desirous to acquire the Italian dominions, and too indifferent about Spain and the West-Indies, made her profit of our rashness. She left the whole weight of the war on England and Holland. She did worse. She not only neglected the war by contributing little or nothing to it, except the name of Austria and the claims of that family; she sacrificed the success of the common cause, for so it was called improperly enough by her, whenever any little inferiour interest that seemed to be hers more immediately came in the way; by which she not only prolonged the war, but increased the annual expense of it to England and Holland, without taking any share in this expense on herself that deserves to be mentioned.

Experience was lost upon us. Our political delirium continued. It grew in some sort habitual by the artifice employed at home, and by the victories obtained abroad. The war languished

guished however upon the whole, notwithstanding our utmost efforts; the weight of Austria grew every year heavier on us, while that of Spain grew every year lighter on France; the Spaniards were able to defend themselves against us at last, and the success of our enemies in Spain made them amends for our victories in Flanders.

The dethronement of Philip in favour of Charles was become evidently a chimerical project in the year 1710, at the latest, and it became in the following year so ineligible by the death of the emperour Joseph, to whom his younger brother Charles succeeded, that one cannot conceive the men, who clamoured for it even then, to have been in earnest; since their aim, in that case, must have been to set the Imperial and Spanish crowns on the same head, against the common interest of Europe and the fundamental principle of the war.

But though we could not conquer Spain by a war, we might have reduced the exorbitant power of France by a peace. We might have stripped her of that barrier wherein this exorbitant power consisted chiefly, as every man, who knew what he meaned when he talked of this exorbitant power, must have intended. We might have laid her as open to the incursions of her neighbours, as her neighbours were to hers: as open as she had been when a prince Casimir, or any other general of reitres, could

penetrate without a siege, and sometimes without a battle, into the heart of her provinces.

But we would not do the latter, because we could not do the former. We acted like men who thought that the exorbitant power of one family could not be reduced, unless a power as exorbitant was raised in another; and who never looked back to preceding centuries to consider the usurpations, the tyranny, and the bigotry, that the house of Austria had exercised in the fulness of her power, and would exercise again if she was ever restored to the same.

We were disappointed in our great political views, after two wars that had lasted twenty-five years with a very short interval between them. We had done our utmost to defeat that scheme of ambition France had opened to herself, and of danger to all her neighbours, by the Pyrenean treaty: and, though this danger affected us less than any other nation engaged in the alliance, we had exhausted ourselves to maintain it.

When king William entered, immediately after the Revolution, on this great scene of action; the unincumbered condition of this nation, which has been hinted at above, was such, that he might have been supported in it by good management, as profusely as he was, and even more effectually, by the revenue then subsisting, by a land-tax, by the excise on malt, and by some additional subsidies, all of which would have been raised within the year. A scheme of this kind was prepared

pared and offered. It was allowed to be practicable: but it was rejected for a reason that appeared plausible in political refinement, and has proved most pernicious in it's consequences. It was said, that a new government, established against the ancient principles and actual engagements of many, could not be so effectually secured any way, as it would be if the private fortunes of great numbers were made to depend on the preservation of it; and that this could not be done, unless they were induced to lend their money to the publick, and to accept securities under the present establishment. Thus the method of funding and the trade of stock-jobbing began. Thus were great companies created, the pretended servants, but in many respects the real masters of every administration.

I do not pretend to determine how far the wisdom of our legislature might have provided, at the beginning of the new war, against the growth and spreading of that cancerous humour, which had begun to gnaw our vitals in the former. All I am to observe is, that, a moneyed interest being firmly established by this time, and such numbers being accustomed to make immense profit at the publick expense, there is no room to wonder, if we proceeded on the same plan during the reign of queen Anne. We did so: and the debts contracted in this war being added to those of the former, the whole of our debt amounted to little less than fifty millions.

mediate acquisition of Naples. We sacrificed all the advantages of the peace, to procure her that of Sicily in the manner we did procure it I have heard it said, while these affairs were in transaction, that the treaty of quadruple alliance would complete that of Utrecht. But the event has shown, and it was obvious to foresee, that one of these treaties would unravel the system of the other. If we had maintained the neutrality of Italy, as we were obliged to do by treaty, even indulging the emperour in the acquisition of Sicily, and yielding to the house of Savoy the eventual successions which we stipulated should be given to Spain, the intention of the treaty of Utrecht would have been preserved, and France by concurring in these measures would have shown her sincerity in maintaining the settlement of Europe. But when she became a party to the quadruple alliance, she meaned nothing more than to give the Spanish branch of Bourbon an opportunity of reannexing to that crown the Italian dominions: and we were grossly her bubbles, when we triumphed that she entered into the quadruple alliance, and made a sham war to oblige Philip to accede to it.

As long, then, as there were hopes of obtaining an extraordinary investiture of Bremen and Verden, we flattered the emperour at no small expense. As soon as it became apparent, that this investiture could be obtained in no other manner than it had been granted formerly, we

insulted

insulted him. We imputed to him designs, he has constantly disowned, and we have never proved; after which we complained of his ingratitude, we threatened war, and we prepared for it by maintaining with great profusion a standing army of Hessians in Germany. The same men, who complained so lately that France had been left too powerful by the treaty of Utrecht, and that great danger would arise from her close connection with Spain, complained now of the too great power of the house of Austria, and of the danger that would arise from a good understanding between the emperour and king Philip. In short, our politics were not only variable, but incomprehensible to every man who knew the state and interest of Great Britain, but was not so well apprised of the several turns of interest, which were to be served abroad.

When our ministers had once departed from the straight line of British policy, the difficulty of returning to it became every year greater, and the inclination every year less. We continued busy and bustling in every court of Europe. We negotiated against the emperour in concert with France, and gave her thereby the means of regaining more of that credit and influence in the empire which she had formerly had, than she could have acquired without our assistance. We contrived to make peace abroad almost as chargeable to us as war. Abuses of every kind were suffered at home. Trade was neither eased nor

nor encouraged, and the gradual payment of our debt was utterly neglected by a minister rather desirous to keep his country under this oppression, than ignorant of the means to deliver her from it. While we acted in this manner, France grew frugal, she made the debts she could not pay sit more lightly on her, she raised her credit, and she extended her commerce. In short, her strength increased, and ours diminished. We were reduced to a state of weakness we had never felt before; and this very weakness was urged as a reason for bearing tamely the losses our merchants sustained, and all the affronts our government received, lest we should be drawn into a war by using reprisals, the common right of nations.

As tame as we were, the insolence of the Spaniards, the reasonable impatience of our merchants, and this very tameness of government, made a sea-war unavoidable, just before the death of the emperour Charles the sixth; which event brought the principal powers of Europe into the field, set the whole continent in a flame, and formed one of those conjunctures, wherein our honour and interest may oblige us to take a part, and for which therefore we should always be prepared.

We were in no degree so prepared, after six or seven and twenty years of peace; and yet when we took a part, we took the most lavish and the most impolitick that we could take. It

was

was a miserable part by sea at first, and through the whole course of the war by land. I shall recal neither what we did, nor what we neglected to do; and I wish, for the honour of my country, that the whole may be buried in oblivion. Thus much only it is to my purpose to observe. First, That our councils seemed to be the echoes of those free-booters, Trenck and Mentzel, who talked of nothing less than conquering the two Alsatias and the three bishopricks, and of laying Champagne waste, while all our offensive projects on the Rhine were daily disappointed: and secondly, That we declined all overtures of peace, when the seat of the war was transferred, with great advantage to France, from Germany to the Netherlands, where we resolved to wage it whether the Dutch would or no, and where we were beat on every spot on which my lord Marlborough had conquered.

Every defeat in this war, like every triumph in the last, became a reason for continuing it: and this management, when no avowable reason could be given for it, gave suspicious and refining persons occasion to throw out a great deal of slander; for such I hope it was. In short, whatever the reasons were, we continued this inauspicious war so long, and we pushed it so far beyond our strength, that we were within a few months of bankruptcy, when the French granted us, miraculously, the same terms that they would have granted two or three years before: and when they might have marched without much trouble

trouble or opposition, after taking Maestricht, into the heart of the Seven Provinces: for our last resource, a Muscovite army, was too far off to have enabled ours to make a stand.

By making the war in the Low Countries almost wholly at our own expense, and without any prospect of success, we meaned to cause such a diversion to the forces of France as might leave Germany nothing to fear on the Rhine, and as might give time and opportunity to the empress queen to drive the French and Spaniards out of Lombardy. We sacrificed ourselves for these purposes: but in this war, as in the last, the court of Vienna sacrificed nothing. From the time the French had been obliged, more by the sickness of their troops and the ill conduct of their generals, than by the force of her arms, to abandon Germany, the empress queen seemed to make war just as it suited her conveniency, to save all the expense she could in the Netherlands, to plunder all she could in Italy, and to make us pay the whole immense subsidies which we gave her for both.

In the Netherlands, we were outnumbered vastly by the deficiencies of her quotas: and in Italy, where we had thrown the Genoese into the arms of France and Spain, with great and just indignation against us for the treaty we had made at Worms, and had, however, obliged them to submit after the battle of Placentia, we lost the whole advantage of it by the insatiable avarice and extreme brutality of the Austrians.

Yet

Yet we continued our efforts on that side still; and the sham siege of Genoa, for it was no more, and the harmless invasions of Provence and Dauphiny had no other meaning than to amuse and impose on us in the excess of our zeal.

Our expenses in every part of this strange war, particularly in the Netherlands, were made without measure, because without control; as they will be soon convinced who look into the artillery, forage, hospital, and other contingent accounts. The parliamentary aids from the year one thousand seven hundred and forty exclusively, to the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-eight inclusively, amount to £.55,522,959. 16*s.* 3*d.* and the new debt we have contracted to more than thirty millions, which are near twenty millions more of debt than France has contracted in the same time: a sum that will appear incredible to future generations, and is so almost to the present. There are three Reflections to be made on this state, which must add to our astonishment. First, That the greatest part of this vast expense has been granted on account of the war, chiefly since there remained no reason for continuing it; that is, since the time when it was in our power to have a peace at least as good as that we have now obtained; and I place this æra no higher than the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven inclusively, though I might place it higher, perhaps, on very good grounds. Secondly, That the debt contracted in

it

it exceeds by much that of king William's, or that of queen Anne's war; though both of them were much longer, and the last not only more widely spread, but carried into countries, the distance of which and many other circumstances increased every article of our expense extraordinarily. Thirdly, That we have thrown, by our negociations and by the late war, into the hands of the house of Bourbon much more dominion in Italy, than would have induced the French at Gertruydenberg to have recalled Philip, and to have given up Spain and the Indies; which they were ready to do at those conferences, as Buys and Vanderdussen acquainted the ministers of the allies, in making one of their reports to that assembly.

Bad as our condition is, let us not despair. Not to despair of the commonwealth, whatever her condition be, is the principle of a true patriot, that is, of a faithful servant to his prince and country: and we may find an example to this purpose, which deserves to be quoted, in a book that is in the hands of most people, and that I hope is not unread at court, I mean the Duke of Sully's Memoirs. In them we find, that Henry the fourth turned his whole application to every thing that might be useful or even convenient to his kingdom, without suffering things that happened out of it to pass unobserved by him, as soon as he had put an end to the civil wars of France, and had concluded a peace with Spain at

Vervins. Is there a man, either prince or subject, who can read without the most elevated and the most tender sentiments the language he held to Sully at this time, when he thought himself dying of a great illness he had at Monceaux? "My friend!" said he, "I have no fear "of death. You, who have seen me expose my "life so often, when I might so easily have kept "out of danger, know this better than any man. "But I must confess, that I am unwilling to die "before I have raised this kingdom to the splen-"dour I have proposed to myself; and before I "have shown my people, that I love them like my "children, by discharging them from a part of the "taxes that have been laid on them, and by go-"verning them with gentleness."

The state of France was then even worse than the state of Great Britain is now, the debts as heavy, many of the provinces entirely exhausted, and none of them in a condition of bearing any new imposition. The standing revenues brought into the king's coffers no more than thirty millions, though a hundred and fifty millions were raised on the people: so great were the abuses of that government in raising of money, and they were not less in the dispensation of it. The whole scheme of the administration was a scheme of fraud, and all who served, cheated the publick, from the highest offices down to the lowest, from the commissioners of the treasury * down to the under-

* Conseilliers dans le conseil des finances.

farmers and the under-treasurers. Sully beheld this state of things, when he came to have the sole superintendency of affairs, with horrour. He was ready to despair: but he did not despair. Zeal for his master, zeal for his country, and this very state seemingly so desperate, animated his endeavours: and the noblest thought, that ever entered into the mind of a minister, entered into his. He resolved to make, and he made the reformation of abuses, the reduction of expenses, and a frugal management, the sinking fund for the payment of national debts, and the sufficient fund for all the great things he intended to do, without overcharging the people.

He succeeded in all. The people were immediately eased, trade revived, the king's coffers were filled, a maritime power was created, and every thing necessary was prepared to put the nation in a condition of executing great designs, whenever great conjunctures should offer themselves. Such was the effect of twelve years wise and honest administration: and this effect would have showed itself in great enterprises against the house of Austria, more formidable in those days than the house of Bourbon has been in ours; if Henry the fourth had not been stabbed by one of those assassins, into whose hands the interest of this house, and the frenzy of religion, had put the dagger more than once.

When we consider, in these memorials, and in others which are come down to us, the deplo-

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rable condition to which France was reduced at the end of the sixteenth century, we feel some of that horrour, which Sully himself felt; and are ready to confess, that the ruin of that kingdom, bankruptcy, and confusion, must have followed: if the opportunity, which this peaceful conjuncture gave, had not been improved immediately, and as wisely, and as vigorously as it was. Shall we not see our own deplorable condition, and the necessary consequences of it, in the same light? Shall we not be much more strongly affected by them? Are we not as near to bankruptcy as the French nation was at that time, and much more so than they are at this time? May not confusion follow it here as well as there? And finally, may not the joint ambition of two branches of Bourbon in some future conjuncture produce effects as fatal, and much more so to us, if we continue in our present state of impotence till such a conjuncture happens, as was to be feared by France at the time we speak of from the joint ambition of two branches of Austria? In short, we have much to apprehend, unless we have the courage and the virtue to probe our domestick wounds to the bottom, and to apply immediately not palliative, but the most specifick remedies. If we do this; instead of fearing others, we may become once more formidable ourselves. But this is certain, that they, who get first out of a distress common to us and to our neighbours, will give the law to the rest.

It may be said, that we have no Sullies among us. I shall not take on me to determine whether we have or no. But I will venture to say, after Sully himself, that although good princes may be wanting to good ministers; yet good ministers will never be wanting to a prince, who has discernment enough to find them; who chooses them for their superiour parts, experience, and integrity; and who resolves to support them, as Henry the fourth supported Sully, against favourite mistresses, the cabals of the court, and the factions of the state.

It may be said again, that a king of France has power enough by the constitution of that government, to support a minister who checks corruption, reforms abuses, and maintains a frugal management of the publick revenue. But it may be asked, how a minister, who should undertake this, could be supported in a government like ours, where he would be sure to have for his enemies all those who have shared so long the publick spoils, or who hope to share them, and where these enemies would have the means and opportunities of supplanting him, notwithstanding the protection of his master. I answer, by the parliament. How many ministers have there been, to whom much national mischief was imputed justly, and no one national good could be ascribed, and who were long supported by the favour of the crown, and by the concurrence of the two houses, which this favour and their own management

ment procured them? Shall these supports be sufficient for a wicked or a weak minister; and shall innocence and ability, with the same favour and better management, be reckoned for nothing? I cannot think so ill even of the present age, as degenerate as it is. It is degenerate no doubt: but I have heard men complain of this degeneracy, who promoted it first, and sought their excuse in it afterward.

The delegated power of a minister, under the legal prerogatives of the crown, is sufficient to carry on a system of reformation and frugality in the ordinary course of things, if the minister really intends it: and whenever extraordinary powers are wanting for extraordinary operations, as they must be in such a state as ours, they will be effectual, if granted; and if refused, they who refuse them, not the minister, will suffer by the refusal, and be answerable to the nation for it. The moneyed man may continue to enjoy a little more revenue by this refusal: but his fortune will be more precarious, and more liable to some future reverse. The merchant will continue to trade, the landed man to plow and sow, without even a prospect of being relieved from their servitude, not for the honest creditors alone, but for usurers and stock-jobbers, for those leeches who fill themselves continually with the blood of the nation, and never cease to suck it. The nation in the mean time will be reduced to the utmost poverty: and it behoves those particularly,

who have brought us so near it, to show that this was not their object, by concurring zealously with those who have used and will continue to use their best endeavours to prevent it.

The difficulties we have to struggle with would not be so great as they are, notwithstanding the immense profusion to which the late war gave occasion and pretence; if we did not feel in this instance, as we feel in others, the fatal consequences of a precedent administration. The payment of our debts might have been easily provided for in that time: nay, fourteen years, which are little more than two thirds of it, would have been sufficient to reduce them to twenty millions. If this had been done, the memory of the person who was at the head of that administration, and had the sole power of it, might have deserved honour.

Let us nourish in ourselves, and cultivate in others, sentiments more elevated than these, and more worthy of the British genius. The greater our national distress and danger are, the greater should the efforts be of every particular man to relieve his country from one, and hereby to guard it against the other. We are in a crisis that must turn either to life or death, and that cannot turn to the former, unless remedies are applied much more effectual than those of mountebanks, who find their accounts in palliating evils and in prolonging diseases. To palliate and to prolong would be, in our case, to kill, or to do something

worse than kill, to break our constitution entirely, to render an accidental illness habitual and incurable.

One or two shillings in the pound, it is said, will be lessened this year upon land; and whatever is wanting for the current service, over and above the two shillings that remain, and the malt, will be borrowed on the credit of the sinking-fund at three per cent. The bait will be tempting, for so must every diminution of taxes be to those, who have crouched so long under the weight of so many. But I may venture to say, that it will be no more than a bait; and that they who swallow it will have reason to repent of their rashness, when they find, as they will find very probably, that the natural effect of such measures must prevent the discharge of any considerable part of our debt, except in a term of years much longer than the prosperity and even the safety of our government admits.

I say the safety, as well as the prosperity: and some reflections very plain and obvious, though made by few, will justify me for saying so. As to the first, trade gave us wealth, wealth gave us power, and power raised our island to be, at one time, a match for France. If we desire to return into the same state, we must return by the same steps which raised us to it: and he, who should make a scheme for the payment of our debts, without a principal regard to the improvement of our trade, would make a very

silly scheme, But it would be just as silly to make a scheme for both, in such a manner, as would render neither practicable.

The necessity of diminishing taxes, in order to improve our trade, becomes a good reason, not for the strange purpose to which it is applied by some, but for hastening all the operations necessary to sink our debts, in order to hasten that diminution of taxes, which will become practicable, when a part of our debt is sunk, and which will facilitate extremely the discharge of the rest. The truth is, that if we defer these operations too long, we may be never able to perform them with equal advantage, nor, by keeping pace with our neighbours, to renew our strength, as fast as they are intent to renew theirs. Our neighbours have suffered by former wars, and have been exhausted by the last as well, though I apprehend not so much as we. France, for instance, has contracted in the late war no more than one third of the additional debt we have contracted in it, as I believe on very good authority: and she has been able to assign funds, which pay the interest of this debt regularly, and sink yearly a part of the principal. I am not so well apprised of the actual state of Spain. But the treasures of the West Indies are poured into her daily; and as she has been long recovered, or recovering, from her ancient indolence and ignorance, she seems to apply herself to the augmentation of her maritime force

to the improvement of her trade, and even to that of domestick manufactures. In a word, what has been said before may be repeated here: they who get soonest out of the present common distress, will give the law to others, or be at least in a condition of not receiving it from any one.

As to national safety, we shall do well to observe how much the system of dominion and power in Europe is less favourable at present to our political interests and views, than it was when we undertook to mend it. Spain was falling, but not fallen into the hands of France, at the beginning of this century: and though the Spanish nation as well as court gave their monarchy afterward to a prince of the house of Bourbon, that they might prevent the dismemberment of it; yet they were averse enough, by long habits of hostility, to a French government. Fortune and we have done so well at last, that these two nations are now closely united by interest and by habit, and that Spain is therefore more than ever estranged from us; the proofs of which are not only recent, but, I fear, actual.

The frontier of France has been the great support of her exhorbitant power, as wise men foresaw fourscore years ago, when Lewis the fourteenth began to raise that wall of Brass, which reaches from the Alps to the Ocean, that it would become. This frontier is now more compact than ever by the acquisition of Lorraine. The branches of the house of Bourbon have taken root

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in Italy as well as in Spain. France has learned by experience to raise and to maintain her credit, and to extend her commerce, for the protection and support whereof she seems more attentive than ever to increase her strength by sea: a strength she will always exert with great advantage over us in some reſpects, I mean in thoſe of order, frugal management, and strict discipline.

The whole empire, except Bavaria and Cologne, was attached to us by inclination as well as interest, in the war which began with this century. It is much otherwise now: and we may say, I fear, too truly, that the influence of France in Germany is little inferiour to what it was while the league of the Rhine subsisted.

The Dutch commonwealth, our beſt ally, and in some sort a barrier to Great Britain, is in a state of dissolution; and has not, either without, or within herself, those means of recovery by conjuncture and by character, that she has had on several occasions from the time her government was first formed.

This short state may serve to show how difficult it will be, till we have paid a good part of our debt, and restored our country in some measure to her former wealth and power, to maintain the dignity of Great Britain, to make her respected abroad, and secure from injuries, or even affronts, on the part of her neighbours. This may appear easy, for aught I know, to some men. But sure I am, it would appear difficult to Burleigh and Walsingham,

Walsingham, if they were to rise from the dead; notwithstanding the success that they had in queen Elizabeth's reign by doing much at little expense, and by employing management much more than force.

These reflections, and such as they suggest naturally to the mind, make it evident, that the future prosperity and safety of this country depend on the speedy diminution of our national debts. Nothing else can secure us effectually against contingent events, that may be of fatal consequence to both. Recent experience has shown how unfit we are become in every respect, except the courage of our common seamen or soldiers, to engage in war. We shall not therefore, I suppose, provoke it easily, or soon. But war may be brought upon us, though we should not provoke it, nor go to the continent to seek it. Nay, we may be reduced to the melancholy dilemma of increasing our annual expense to assert our rights, to protect our trade, and to maintain our dignity; or of sitting tamely down and sacrificing them all. I think, nay I hope, that we should not do the last: and yet we should have much greater difficulties to struggle with in our present situation, than we had in the former, great as they were, if we attempted to do, what was then so shamefully neglected. We cannot increase our expenses now, nor shall we be able to do so till some part of our national debt be discharged, without mortgaging on the remainder of the sinking fund,

fund, which would soon take away all hope of ever paying any part of this debt, and leave us nothing to mortgage but our land and our malt; whereas if a considerable part of this debt was discharged before any new war broke out, or we were reduced to any such dilemma as I have mentioned; we should find ourselves, while it lasted, in a much better condition of defence or offence, and we might be able, as soon as it was over, to resume the same operations, and to proceed in our great domestick concern.

These considerations will have great weight with men, who are able to combine all that is to be combined on such an important occasion, and, by reflecting on the past, and by observing the present, to judge of the future. The only effectual, and therefore necessary, remedies may appear violent, even to them: but they will consider, and every man ought to consider, that if we cannot bear our distemper, and will not bear our cure, the political body must perish. This miserable state will create justly the indignation of mankind. But this indignation should turn against those who have brought us into it, not against those who would deliver us from it. This is the language of reason dictated by publick spirit: but private interest and narrow views will dictate another.

The moneyed men will complain loudly, that they are exposed to perpetual reductions of interest, which have served to no other purpose than

than to nourish the profusion of successive administrations; and, if this was to continue, their complaints would be just, and the hardships imposed upon them intolerable. It is therefore just, that neither they should consent to this new reduction of interest, which may be called a new tax upon them, nor the landed men to the continuance of that old and heavy tax on land, unless they have the utmost security, that the whole shall be applied to it's proper use. There will be still complaints; and we shall hear the melancholy condition to which the widow and the orphan, whose small but sole fortunes are in the funds, will be reduced, most pathetically displayed. The answer will be, however, obvious. If the widow and the orphan, who have their estates in money, suffer by the reduction of interest; the widow and the orphan, who have their estates in land, will suffer by the continuance of the tax upon it; and both one and the other must take their share in the common calamity of their country.

But the truth is, that the feeble voice of the widow and the orphan will be little heard. The great din will be raised by stock-jobbers and usurers, by the principal men in our great companies, who, born to serve and to obey, have been bred to command even government itself. These men will roar aloud, and endeavour, by silent intrigue, as well as by noise, to obstruct every measure, that tends to emancipate government

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out of their hands, to make the exchequer, what it ought to be, the great spring of publick credit, and the great scene of all transactions relative to the publick receipts and payments.

Let these men learn therefore to submit, and to reason, as old Bateman did, when the reduction of interest was agreed to in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventeen. He told my lord Stanhope, he was glad this resolution had been taken; because, though his interest diminished, he should think his principal more secure than ever. On the whole, complaints from this quarter will make little impression on a minister, who knows that though such men have been employed while new debts were to be contracted every year, and the publick, like an extravagant spend-thrift, was obliged to deal with usurers on their own terms; yet they are not to be consulted when debts are to be paid, and the publick to be taken out of their hands; who knows, in short, that his arms are longer than theirs, and makes them feel that he will keep, or not keep, measures with them according to their behaviour; who pursues steadily the wise and honest design of rendering his own and every future administration independent of them.

Much opposition will arise from two other quarters, the country and the court; in which I should apprehend that the least plausible might be the most successful.

The landed man will think it hard, that he is not

not suffered to enjoy a little ease after having borne the burden and heat of the day, during a long course of expensive peace and of ruinous war. All that can be said, to persuade him, that an immediate dimininution of the land-tax is contrary to his interest, will pass for deception and paradox. He will be apt to reason like his country tenants, who are always frightened at an immediate expense though remote, and yet great profit must be the certain consequence of it. Let such a man look back then, and take his lesson from what is past. He will find that, while he winked at profusion because he was flattered by abatements on the land-tax debts, debts were contracted that have cost him much more, than the continuance of that tax would have cost him. If we look back to the first ten years of his present majesty's reign, we shall find this very remarkably verified. Let the same man, after he has looked back, look forward again. He will see that, as any diminution of the land-tax to be supplied out of the produce of the sinking fund, or by borrowing even at three per cent on the credit of it, must prevent, or retard, which may be equivalent to preventing, the discharge of any considerable part of our debt; so he will continue exposed to have the whole tax laid anew, on the first occasion either real or pretended. He may find himself, after a little respite, under the load of the same tax, and of an increased debt: and this may be all

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he will get by refusing to bear a little longer, for his own sake, and for an important object, what he has borne several years for the sake of others, and for the support of a most unsuccessful war; for such it may be reckoned, after the French were beat at Dettingen.

On the other side, if he is wise enough to desire, that the four shillings in the pound be continued for a few years; he will have his share in the common benefits of diminishing publick debts, increasing publick credit, improving trade, and restoring national prosperity. He may entertain the comfortable hope of a time when he, or his posterity, will have no need of consenting to any tax at all on land in time of peace; since the annual produce of other funds will be sooner or later, in this method, sufficient to defray the annual expense of the government. He may acquire an advantage that will make him ample amends for what it cost him. Such of the taxes, whether of excise or of customs, as bear hardest on the poor labourers and on our own manufactures may be reduced, gradually at least, without any considerable interruption of the operations necessary to discharge our national debt: and though he is little accustomed to think himself as much affected by other taxes, as he is by the land-tax, he will soon perceive, that a saving on every thing he eats, drinks, or wears, is a lasting and a large repayment of what this tax took from him while he consented to continue it.

it. He will find himself a gainer, not only by what he saves in his expenses, but by the improvement of his estate; for the whole system of national wealth and prosperity are intimately connected.

The courtier will complain loudly, authoritatively, and pompously, that any retrenchments on our annual expenses may do more hurt, than the saving can do good. But I believe it not hard to show, that three shillings, or three shillings and sixpence in the pound on land, leaving the rest of the four shillings to go to the sinking fund, would be more than sufficient to answer all necessary expenses in time of peace. Wise men are able to do a great deal with a little: every knave or fool is ready to do a little with a great deal. The former know, that good policy consists in observing two sorts of œconomy, the greater and the less: to proportion, by the first, our expenses to our circumstances and to those of our neighbours, and to do it with the utmost frugality that these circumstances combined together will admit: to control, by the second, in the most strict and regular manner, the dispensation of the publick treasure from the highest down to the lowest offices of the state. It is of the utmost importance, at this time especially, that both these kinds of œconomy be practised. Our well-being, even our security, depends upon them. If we do not pay our debts, we must sink under the load of them: and if we go about

to pay them, without practising these two sorts of œconomy; the ridiculous figure, which I have seen in a Dutch print, of a man toiling and sweating to cord a rope of hay, while an ass bites it off at the other end as fast as he cords it, will be our proper emblem.

Extreme frugality was one of the means employed by the great minister who has been quoted above: and the success he had, in similar circumstances, should encourage the practice of the same frugality in ours. But he employed another expedient likewise, which is not less necessary here than it was there, nor in our time than it was in his. The expedient I mean is that of reforming abuses. Sully rendered this reformation no inconsiderable fund for the payment of publick debts. Whether we can do so, as effectually as he did, or no, I determine not. But thus much is certain. Such a reformation will make all future services be carried on at a cheaper rate for the publick; and saving is often the surest way of gaining. Materials might be collected, not for a pamphlet, but for a regular treatise under distinct heads, concerning the abuses and corruption, which prevail among us in every part of the publick service, and concerning the consequences of them: I know not too whether some work of this kind should not be undertaken, as invidious as it may seem, if nothing is done to reform these abuses, and to extinguish this corruption.

They were creeping forward long ago; but since

since a certain period, they have advanced with very large strides. Frauds were connived at, perhaps encouraged, and corruption was propagated formerly by principal men, who had, for the most part, more ambition than avarice, and who raised, by these means, a formidable party that might support them in power. But in process of time, and in favourable conjunctures, the contagion rose higher, and spread still wider; principal men became parties to the greatest frauds; and the highest of those who governed, and the lowest of those who were governed, contributed, in their degrees, to the universal rapine. The greatest particular cheat, whereof any example can be found, was, I believe, that which arrears of subsidies to foreign princes, and arrears of pay to foreign troops, gave the opportunity and the means of executing.

I am sensible, that the representation I have made of the degeneracy of our age and people may give occasion to say, that the very things I have been pleading for are impracticable. It will be asked, what expectation can be entertained of raising a disinterested publick spirit among men, who have no other principle than that of private interest, who are individuals rather than fellow-citizens, who prey on one another, and are, in a state of civil society, much like to Hobbes's men in his supposed state of nature? I must agree, though unwillingly, that the enterprise is difficult. But the more difficult it is, if nothing less can

After all that has been said in these papers, and all that might be said, concerning the conduct of the houſe of Austria, from the reign of king William to the present time; it may be proper to add something by way of precaution, and to prevent very false conclusions, that many will be ready to draw from very true premises.

It is notoriously true, that a spirit of bigotry, of tyranny, and of avarice, in the court of Vienna, maintained long the troubles in Hungary, which might have been appeased much sooner than they were. Thus a great and constant diversion was kept up in favour of France, even at the time when the two houſes of Auſtria and Bourbon were struggling for that great prize, the Spanish succession, till the French troops took possession of Passau, and the malecontentents of Hungary raised contributions in the very suburbs of Vienna.

It is notoriously true, that we might have had nothing more than a defensive war, as I have said in the foregoing papers, to make against France, with an Austrian prince on the throne of Spain, at the death of Charles the second; if the emperour Leopold would have concurred in the wise and practicable measures which king William proposed.

It is notoriously true, that we might have avoided the defeat at Almanza, and have supported much better the war in Spain; if a predilection for acquisitions in Italy had not determined

mined the councils of Vienna to precipitate the evacuation of Mantua, wherein an army of French was blocked up after the battle of Turin, and which was let loose in this manner, against the opinion of the queen and the states general, time enough to beat us at Almanza.

Finally, for I will descend no more to particulars, it is notoriously true, that we might have taken Toulon, and have carried the war into the best provinces of France, for which queen Anne had made, at a vast expense, all the necessary preparations; if the Austrians had not detached, in that very point of time, twelve thousand men on the expedition to Naples, and if prince Eugene had not shown too visibly, before persons still alive, that the taking of Toulon was the least of his objects.

These facts are sufficient to show, how much the mistaken policy of the court of Vienna has overloaded her allies during more than half a century, and has defeated the great design which these allies, and Britain in particular, carried on for her at the expense of infinite blood and treasure. Now there are many, in this kingdom, very ready to conclude from these facts, and from others of the same kind posterior to these, that our experience should teach us to neglect the interests of the house of Austria, and to be regardless of all that passes on the continent for the time to come. But surely such conclusions are very

false. The principle of our conduct has been right, and our manner of pursuing it alone wrong. It was our neglect of the general interest of Europe, from the Pyrenean treaty to the revolution of our government in one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight, that gave to France a long opportunity, and the means of raising an exorbitant power. It has been zeal without knowledge, and a strange subserviency to private interests, which have almost exhausted this country, and defeated all our endeavours for the publick good since that time. This we may alter. The principle of policy we cannot, as long as the division of power and property in Europe continues the same. We are an island indeed: but if a superiour power gives the law to the continent, I apprehend that it will give it to us too in some great degree. Our forefathers apprehended, with reason, the exorbitant power of the house of Austria; and thought that the pretensions of Mary queen of Scots might give, even when she was a prisoner, opportunity and advantage, as they did no doubt, to this power to disturb our peace, and even to invade our island. The exorbitant power of the two branches of the house of Bourbon give surely in this respect, as well as in others, at least the same cause of apprehension now. It is therefore plainly our interest, to maintain the rivalry between the families of Austria and of Bourbon; and for that purpose to assist the former on

every occasion against the latter, as far as the common cause of Europe, not her private ambition, requires; and as far as our national circumstances may enable us to measure out our assistance in any conjuncture to her.

These are the measures and proportions, according to which alone political societies ought to unite in alliances, and to assist one another. There is a political, as well as a natural self-love; and the former ought to be, to every member of a commonwealth, the same determining principle of action, where publick interest is concerned, that the latter will be to him most certainly wherever his private interest is concerned. I have heard it often said of one man, that he was a friend or an enemy to the house of Austria; and of another, that he was a friend or an enemy to the house of Bourbon. But these expressions proceed generally from passion and prepossession, as the sentiments they impute must proceed, whenever they are real, from these causes, or from one which is still worse, from corruption. A wise prince, and a wise people, bear no regard to other states, except that which arises from the coincidence or repugnancy of their several interests; and this regard must therefore vary, as these interests will do, in the perpetual fluctuation of human affairs. Thus queen Elizabeth and her people opposed the house of Austria, and supported the house of Bourbon, in the sixteenth century. Thus

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queen Anne and her people opposed the house of Bourbon, and supported the house of Austria, in the eighteenth. The first, indeed, was done with wiser council; the last with greater force of arms. By the first, our country was enriched; by the last, it was impoverished——

N. B. These considerations were written thus far in the year seventeen hundred and forty-nine, but were never finished.

THE

SUBSTANCE

OF SOME

LETTERS,

Written originally in French, about the Year 1720,

TO

Mr. de POUILLY.

SINCE you are so curious to know what passed in a conversation lately between one of your acquaintance and myself, wherein you have been told that I maintained a very singular paradox; I will give you some account of it, a general and short account, at least, of the first part, and one more particular and more full of the last, which is called paradoxical. You led me first, in my retreat, to abstract philosophical reasonings: and, though it be late to begin them at forty years of age, when the mind has not been accustomed to them earlier, yet I have learned enough under so good a guide, not to be afraid of engaging in them, whenever the cause of God and of natural religion is concerned.

They were both concerned, very deeply, on the occasion you refer to. There had been much discourse, in the company that was present, concerning

cerning the absurd opinions, which many theistical philosophers entertained of old about the supreme Being. Many had been cited, and many reflections had been made on them, by several, when the dispute became particular between Damon* and me; he denying, and I affirming, that there are sufficient proofs of the existence of one supreme Being, the first intelligent cause of all things. You may be sure, I made use of those you furnished me with by a geometrical application of the doctrine of final causes, which shows, in various instances, what numberless chances there are against one, that intelligence and design were employed in the production of each of these phænomena.

When I could not silence my adversary by these proofs, though they carry probability up to a reasonable, if not to an absolute, certainty, I insisted on a proof which must give this certainty, I think, to every one who acknowledges that we are capable of demonstrative knowledge. I argued, "à posteriori," from the intuitive knowledge of ourselves, and the sensitive knowledge of objects exterior to ourselves, which we have, up to that demonstrative knowledge of God's existence, which we are able to acquire by a due use of our reason. Here we stuck a little, and he was ready to deny all sensitive knowledge, on the chimerical notions of father Malebranche, and some other philosophers, without considering that he deprived himself, in

* I choose to call him by this feigned name here.

denying

denying the existence of God, of those expedients, by which the others pretended to account for the perception of the ideas of objects exterior to the mind, independently of any sensitive knowledge. I endeavoured to show him, that to renounce sensitive knowledge, was to renounce, in some sort, humanity, and to place ourselves in some unknown rank, either above it, or below it. I endeavoured to state the true notion, by stating the true bounds, of sensitive knowledge, which is not sufficient indeed to show us the inward constitutions of snbstances, and their real essences; but which is sufficient to prove to us their existence, and to distinguish them by their effects. I concluded this article by quoting to him a passage in the logick of Port-royal, wherein it is said, that no man ever doubted, in good earnest, whether there is an Earth, a sun, and a moon, no more than he doubted, whether the whole is bigger than a part; that we may say, with our mouths, that we doubt of all these things, because we may lie; but that we cannot oblige our minds to say so: from whence it is concluded, more generally than I shall conclude, that Pyrrhonians are not a sect persuaded of what they say, but a sect of liars. He did not insist much longer, but left me to pursue my argument from intuitive and sensitive knowledge, to a demonstration of God's existence, which great and fundamental truth results necessarily from a concurrence of all the kinds of human knowledge employed in the proof of it.

I was

I was not interrupted by him in the course of this argument, nor did he attempt to break any links of this chain of demonstration, but followed the example of all those who refuse to yield to it. They are so far from considering the degrees, the bounds, and within these, the sufficiency, of human knowledge, that they ask continually, and that others endeavour, very often, vainly to give them, knowledge concerning the divine nature and attributes particularly, which it is impossible and unnecessary we should have, even on the supposition that there is a God. Unable to break through this demonstration, they hope to weaken the effect of it, on themselves and others, by sounding high the difficulties that present themselves whenever we reason on the manner of God's existence, on his attributes, on his providence, and on many points relative to these. That is, they will not receive a demonstration, made according to the clearest and most distinct ideas that we have, and by the most precise connection of them, because there are other things which we cannot demonstrate, nor explain, for want of other ideas. This proceeding is so unreasonable, that the atheist himself does not hold it on any other occasion; but admits the truth of many propositions, though he be unable to resolve several difficulties that are, some way or other, relative to them. He reasons on this important article of human knowledge, as he would be ashamed to reason on any other.

I might have rested the argument here, because though

though there are secrets of the divine nature and œconomy which human reason cannot penetrate, yet several of the objections to them, which atheists commonly make, even that of physical and moral evil, and the supposed unjust distribution of good and evil, which has been made in all ages, and which is now more prevalent than ever, by the joint endeavours of atheists and christian divines, are easy to be refuted, These subjects have been so often treated between you and me, that I shall say nothing of them here, though I did not decline them there. On the contrary, if I do not flatter myself, I said enough to defeat the attack of the atheist, and to disappoint the treachery of the divine. After which I insisted with great reason surely on my side, that these difficulties, and more of the same sort, were so little able to embarrass the theist, that, instead of being repugnant to his system, a necessary consequence of it is, that such difficulties should arise. He is so little surprised to find them, that he would be surprised not to find them. In demonstrating, to him, the existence of God, his reason has not demonstrated to him a being little raised above humanity, and about whom he may always assume on human ideas, such as the divinities of the heathen were. She has demonstrated to him the existence of an all-perfect self-existent being, the source of all existence, invisible and incomprehensible; the author, not only of all that is visible and comprehensible to his creatures, but of all that is, in the whole extent of nature, whether

whether visible or comprehensible to them or not: From hence he concludes, and well he may, that there must be many phænomena physical and moral for which he can, and many for which he cannot, account. The system of God's attributes being, like the exercise of them, infinite, and our system of ideas and of mental operations being very narrow and imperfect, it follows necessarily, that some few parts of the former system are proportionable to the latter, and that a multitude of others are not so. A theist may suffer himself to be led into difficulties; but the atheist, take what system of atheism you please, must fall into absurdity, and be obliged to assert what implies contradiction.

I considered the supreme Being, in all I said, as a first intelligent cause, and as the creator of the universe. From hence my antagonist took occasion to ridicule what theistical poets, philosophers, and legislators have advanced concerning the first principles or the beginning of things, and operations of a divine wisdom and power, in the production of them, as if they had been contemporary historians and spectators of what they related most affirmatively and circumstantially. I joined with him, for the most part, in giving them this ridicule, and expressed myself with a just indignation against them, for attempting to impose so many fictions on mankind, and for presuming to account for the proceedings of infinite wisdom and power, by the whimsies of their own imaginations. He did not

spare

spare Moses, nor I Plato. But when he went so far as to deny, on the strength of a very weak sophism, that we are obliged to ascribe the creation or formation of the world to intelligence and wisdom, he turned, I think, the ridicule on himself, for he reasoned thus:

When you investigate the proceedings of nature, you observe certain means, that seem, to you, proportioned to certain ends. You perceive too, that you cannot imitate nature any other way than by proportioning means to ends, and thus you frame that complex idea of wisdom, to which you ascribe the phænomena, and the imaginary final causes of them. But you are grossly mistaken when you assume, that nature acts by such means as seem to you proportioned to these ends. Here is a clock which marks the hours and minutes, and strikes regularly, at certain periods, a certain number of times. The inward construction of this clock is unknown to you. But you see one made, which, by the means of certain weights, produces all the same effects. Will you assert now that the motions of the first clock are regulated by weights, because those of the second are so? You will be much deceived if you do, for the motions of the first clock are produced and regulated by a spring.

This argument would have some force in opposition to such naturalists as Strato of Lampsacus, as Des Cartes, and as others who have made hypothetical worlds, and have pretended to account for all the phænomena by such laws of matter and motion as they have thought fit to

establish. But in the present case it is a mere paralogism, and unworthy of the man who employed it, since it serves to explain and confirm that very reasoning which it is intended to oppose. The same motions are produced indeed by different means, but still these different means are proportioned alike to the same end, which proves the very thing I would prove, the intelligence of a workman.

When we had done speaking of philosophers who admit the beginning of the world, we proceeded to those who deny it; and Damon seemed to think himself strongly intrenched in the system of it's eternity. As we cannot conceive, said he, that matter was created and brought out of nothing, so we cannot conceive neither, that matter could of itself produce motion, nor that matter and motion together could produce thought. But there arises from hence no necessity of assuming, that there is any superiour Being. Matter, motion, thought are eternal, and have been always what they are. The same nature, and the same course of things that exist actually have always existed.

To this it was easy to answer, that if I agreed with him in owning the eternity of the world, this concession would not infirm the proofs I had brought of an eternal Being, distinct from the world as the workman is from his work. We may allow the world to be eternal, without allowing that it is the sole eternal Being. All that exists has a cause of it's existence, either out of itself, or in itself. It has no cause of it's existence out of itself,

itself, if it is the sole eternal Being. It has this cause then within itself, and exists by the necessity of it's own nature. The atheist affirms then, that it is impossible to conceive, that this world should not exist; or should exist any otherwise than it does exist, both in matter and in form. This seems to me infinitely absurd; for the atheist either has no ideas in his mind when he pronounces these words, "exists by the ne-"cessity of it's nature;" or he understands such a necessity of existence, that a supposition of the contrary would imply contradiction. If the atheist says, he has no idea of such a necessity, he has then no idea of the eternity of the world. If he says, as Damon did say, that he can no more conceive this world not to exist, or to exist differently from it's present existence, than he can conceive the equality of twice two to four not to exist, he says nothing to the purpose; since the necessity of existence, according to him, cannot be admitted, till he has given us another definition of what we are to understand by these words; and another definition, intelligible and reasonable, I think, he never will be able to give.

After having pushed this argument beyond reply, which I borrowed but did not weaken, I added, that Aristotle, and other ancient philosophers, who believed the world eternal, did not fall into the absurdity of believing it uncaused. They believed it eternal, in the order of time, but they believed it the effect of a superiour cause, in order of causality. The distinction is, perhaps,

too metaphysical, but it serves to show, since they made it, to what shifts they were driven in maintaining the eternity of the world, and how little reason the modern atheist has to lean on their authority.

From refuting his opinions, I was led to advance one of my own, and to assert, that this fact, "The world had a beginning," is a fact, founded on such a tradition, as no reasonable man can refuse to accept. This is the paradox, in advancing of which I had not only Damon, but almost all those who were present, against me. It took up the rest of our conversation, and I will tell you, not only what I said, to support my opinion then, but what has come into my thoughts upon the same subject since.

Though we cannot have, strictly speaking, a certain knowledge of any fact whereof we have not been ourselves witnesses, yet are there several such facts whereof we cannot doubt. High probability must stand often in lieu of certainty, or we must be, every moment, at a loss how to form our opinions and to regulate our conduct. Such is our condition, and we cannot think it unreasonably imposed, since we are able, by a right use of our reason, to ascend through various degrees from absolute improbability, which is little distant from evident falsehood, to that degree of probability which is little distant from evident truth. On this principle let us proceed to consider, how high this proposition, "The world had a be-" ginning," stands in the scale of probability. We shall

shall find perhaps, that it stands too high to have the proposition pass for a paradox, when I have told you what was said in conversation, and what has occurred to me since, on the same subject.

An historical fact, which contains nothing that contradicts general experience, and our own observation, has already the appearance of probability; and, if it be supported by the testimony of proper witnesses, it acquires all the appearances of truth; that is, it becomes really probable in the highest degree. A fact on the other hand, which is repugnant to experience, shocks us from the first; and if we receive it afterward for a true fact, we receive it on outward authority, not on inward conviction. Now to do so is extremely absurd; since the same experience, that contradicts this particular fact, affirms this general fact, that men lie very often, and that their authority alone is a very frail foundation of assent.

It may seem a little extraordinary, and perhaps chimerical, to our first thoughts, to examine which is most conformable to experience, the eternity of the world, or the beginning of it in time; and it would be really so, if, to constitute this conformity to experience, it were strictly necessary, on every occasion, to cite a fact of similar kind. But there is no such necessity in the nature of things, and this conformity may be sufficiently constituted otherwise. Were it not so, our ignorance would produce very contrary effects, equally absurd; for this mother of

superstitious credulity would be the mother likewise of most unreasonable incredulity.

The probability of a fact, whereof there are frequent and notorious examples, may force our assent at once, like those which happen constantly in the ordinary course of things. But still it is true, that a fact, of which we find no precise example within our knowledge, may have a conformity, properly so called, with our experience. The probability arising from this sort of conformity will not be perceived, indeed, so soon as the other, but when it is perceived, will determine alike. This case may be compared to that of the mathematician, who arrives at truth by a long process of demonstration, and who can doubt of this truth afterward, no more than he doubted of those self-evident truths which carry instantaneous conviction to the mind.

A fact may be, in the respect we speak of here, indifferent. We may discover, in our experience, none of the same sort; and yet none that imply contradiction with it. Such a fact therefore, is merely new; and experience will be far from teaching us to reject any fact on this account alone. When such facts, therefore, new to us, according to the extent of our knowledge, but not so to other men, are attested by credible witnesses, he must act very unreasonably, who refuses to give that degree of assent to them, which is proportionable to the credibility of the witnesses. Again, the fact may be conformable to experience by a certain analogy physical or moral, if not by particular examples, and may be admitte

admitted therefore, on proper testimony, more easily still, than one of those which I called indifferent. One rests wholly on testimony, but experience gives to the other an indirect, if not a direct, confirmation.

Let me quote a story, which will serve to illustrate all I have been saying. A certain king of Siam was firmly persuaded, that Sommona-Codom had straddled over the gulf of Bengal; that the print of his right foot was seen at Pra-bat, and that of his left foot at Lanca. This pious legend was certainly repugnant to his majesty's experience, the first foundation of probability: and he fell into the absurdity of believing it on the most precarious of human authorities, the authority of his priests, who had taught him, perhaps, that the merit of his faith in the legend of Sommona-Codom increased as the probability of what it contained diminished. When the Dutch ambassador assured the same prince, that the surface of the water hardened so much in his country, during the winter, that men, and beasts, and heavy carriages passed over it, the prince treated him as a liar. He knew no example of this kind: and the seeming nonconformity to experience, in this case, had the effect which the real nonconformity to experience should have had in the other. I call this a seeming nonconformity; because although the good Siamese knew no example, in point, of what the ambassador told him, yet he might have reflected on several particular objects of his knowledge, that would have brought it

up to a real conformity. He knew, for I think the art of casting cannon was known in his country, that extreme heat could give fluidity to the hardest metals: from whence he might have concluded, very naturally, that extreme cold was capable of producing a very contrary effect, that of condensing and hardening fluid substances. In his country there was no ice; but he knew that there fell sometimes on the neighbouring mountains of Ava, of Pegu, and of Laos, a certain white cold and solid substance, which was nothing else than water, condensed and hardened in one season, and melting and flowing in another. He was a man of good sense, they say, and therefore we may believe, that these considerations discovering to him a real, though not exact, conformity to his experience, he gave credit to the Dutchman afterward.

Let us consider now, on our part, whether there are not facts, that contain all that is necessary to establish the highest probability, though there are no examples of the same, and though we should allow, that a bare non-repugnancy to experience, or a strong analogy to it, do not afford sufficient grounds of probability. Suppose then a fact, preserved in history or tradition, which has the two conditions of nonrepugnancy and of analogy, and the contrary to which cannot be asserted without absurdity. If the negative be absurd, is it not agreeable to right reason, that we adhere to the affirmative?

It may be said, perhaps, that the supposition

I make cannot have place in historical facts, that these are in some sort arbitrary, they may be affirmed or denied, according to the credibility of the testimony. That Julius Cæsar conquered the Britons, or that Genghiz-khan conquered China may be true; but it may be true, likewise, that Cæsar was beat by the Britons, and that Genghiz-khan did not even march into China. It may be said, that when such facts, as we meet with frequently in the romances of all kinds, are concerned, we may affirm that the contrary is true, or that no such events ever happened; but that it will not follow, that an historical or traditional fact is true, because it appears to us, that to suppose the contrary is absurd. I enter no further into this disquisition, but I content myself to say, that there is, at least, one such fact, conveyed to us by tradition, the truth of which we must admit, because it is absurd to assume the contrary, and because one or the other must be necessarily true. The fact I mean is this, that the world, we inhabit, had a beginning in time, and the same may be said of our whole solar system, and of the whole system of the universe. Now this fact, being denied very dogmatically, and there neither being nor ever having been any living contemporary human testimony for it or against it, we must, I think, be decided in this case, by considering, whether the beginning or eternity of the world implies any contradiction with what we know, or is repugnant to our clearest, most distinct, and

and best determined ideas. One of these facts must be true, since the world exists actually. If it can be shown, therefore, that the opinion of it's eternity is an absurd opinion, I must be convinced that it had a commencement.

To prove the absurdity of the former, there seems to be a very obvious method, and an argument the more conclusive, because it is, in opposition to the atheist, an argument "ad "hominem," an argument drawn from the only solution of one of the greatest difficulties which the theist proposes to him. If this solution be not good, he remains without a reply, and if it be good, as I think indeed that it is sufficient to answer this particular difficulty, there arises from it an argument against himself, much stronger than that which the theist opposed to him, and which I am ready to acknowledge, that he has fully answered. What is here said, requires to be explained by a deduction of particulars.

He who denies the commencement, and asserts the eternity of the world, must believe, that this planet of ours has been, from all eternity, such as we see that it is. I say, that he must believe it to be so, since, if he admitted such changes in it as had overturned the whole order of physical nature, destroyed all the species of animals, and confounded all the elements in a new chaos, the dispute would be over, and he convicted, at once, of the grossest absurdity, because a God, a Δημιῦργος, would be as necessary in this case, as in that of an original creation.

In

In short, such a renewal of the world requiring no less wisdom and power than the formation of it, the dispute on the atheist's part would sink into á cavil about words. He is obliged therefore to maintain, that this planet of ours has been always, upon the whole, much what it is; that there have been, from eternity, the same general laws, and the same order of physical nature; an infinite succession of material causes and effects, blind causes of uniform effects, uniform in kind, if not in degree; causes, which have been effects; effects, which become causes in their turn, and proceed in this manner round the circle of eternity. When we quote to the atheist the universal consent of tradition, in affirming that the world had a beginning, he laughs at the proof. Whether he has any right to do so, will be seen presently. In the mean time, we cannot be surprised that he, who rejects a demonstration, should pay no regard to a tradition; but we may be well surprised, when, following the atheist on, we find him calling tradition to his aid, and leaning wholly upon it.

If the world is eternal, why does our knowledge of it go no further back, why have we not more ancient memorials, says the divine? The same reason, says the atheist, which hinders us from having records, where we have any, beyond two or three thousand years in a space of five or six thousand, to which, according to you, the antiquity of the world extends, is just as good to hinder us from seeing further backward, in a longer,

longer, and even in an infinite space of time. Now here theology comes in to the aid of atheism, as it does upon more occasions than this. The history, which is ascribed to the legislator of the Jews, and which it is required that we should believe implicitly, assures us, that the world was once entirely drowned; and through the whole course of sacred, as well as profane, scriptures, we hear of other inundations, of earthquakes, of plagues, of devastations of countries, and of captivities of people, by all, or some of which, not only numbers of men have been destroyed, but whole political societies have been lost. Thus the atheist has it in his power to make the same use of holy writ, which the divine makes of profane history; that is, he adopts whatever makes for his purpose, and rejects whatever does not. He finds ancient governments frequently dissolved, and new ones rising. The records of the former, as well as their laws and customs, perish with them. The latter remain often very long in ignorance and barbarity, and have not the means, nor even the desire, of conveying the events of their own time, nor the traditions of former times by authentick records to posterity. He will not fail to observe, that all we know of ancient history, except those broken scraps of it which Jewish traditions mention, has come down to us from the Greeks; that many centuries passed, after the deluge, before Cadmus, or any one else, carried the use of letters to this people; and that this people not having employed

employed them to write history till many centuries afterward, it is not astonishing, that we know as little as we do concerning times more ancient than those. The atheist triumphs in this answer to the divine, and though no man abhors his cause more than I do, I think him thus far in the right. But the scene will soon change, if a theist interposes. His answer to the divine's question will indeed stand good, but out of this very answer there will arise a decisive argument against him.

When the atheist has sounded the deluge of Deucalion high, and admitted, for the sake of his argument, that of Noah; when he has added to these all those other deluges, of which tradition speaks, that of Xisuthrus, that of Ogyges, that which the Chinese annals mention, that whereof the priests of Sais informed Solon, and that, if it was not the same, whereof the memory had been preserved among the people of America, beside a multitude of devastations of other kinds, he will think himself very strong. But the theist may ask him a very puzzling question, Was there any thing supernatural in the production of these terrible catastrophes? The divine might answer, that there was; but he could not: for if he did, he would acknowledge the existence of a supreme Being, which he denies. It remains then, that all he has said about the immutable order and laws of nature, which have maintained the world in much the same state, and such as it is, from all eternity, must

must pass for nothing, and the theist will insist, that if such events as these, which tend directly to the dissolution of our planet, and the extermination of the whole human race, have been produced so often, in five or six thousand years, by the action of blind causes, matter and motion alone, it is repugnant to common sense to believe, either that such events have not happened an infinite number of times, in an infinite space of time; or that having so happened, they should not have once destroyed the world entirely, and made the supposition of a God necessary to restore it to the state in which we see it. The theist will insist further against the atheist, that it is absurd to confine these phænomena to such bounds, and to accompany them with just such circumstances as suit his purpose. The purpose of the atheist required, that these destructions of mankind should happen often enough to defend his hypothesis against that question, Why have we not more ancient memorials of the world, and of the inhabitants of it? What his purpose required, is exactly answered, by the eternal complaisance of blind material causes. The world was never entirely destroyed, nor mankind entirely exterminated, nor any necessity created of a God to restore them. But there have been as many of these destructions, as may be improved to extricate the atheist out of the difficulty which is laid in his way.

The divine would sit down well satisfied with the state to which, I suppose, the dispute is reduced

reduced by the theist, if he had nothing more at heart, than to maintain the existence of God, by maintaining the commencement of the world. But he has something more at heart, it must have commenced, it must have been renewed, and it must have been repeopled, in the manner Moses relates, and just at the time which he fixes, according to the calculations that learned men have grounded on the genealogies contained in the book of Genesis. For this purpose a system has been invented by crowding profane into the extent of sacred chronology, and by making as many anecdotes of the former, as can be so made, seem to coincide with those of the latter. Divines would be thought to prove the latter by concurrent evidence; but in reality they assume it to be true, and by this assumption alone can the violence, with which they drag profane anecdotes to their purpose, be in any sort excused. That I may not quote to you any of those numberless heavy writers, who have taken this task upon them, I will bring forward on this occasion Mr. de Meaux, the honour of the Gallican or rather of the Christian church, and the shame of that of Rome. This writer, who possessed in the highest degree the talent of seducing the imagination, when he could not convince the judgment, running over, in his Discourse on Universal History, those ages which succeeded the deluge, in a very agreeable manner, but on very precarious authority, makes no scruple of affirming, that there is no ancient history wherein

wherein the marks of a new world do not appear manifestly in these early times, and long after them. These endeavours to confirm the Mosaick system by a multitude of uncertain traditions, as well as the history itself, compiled, no doubt, from other traditions, might be sufficient to take all authority from tradition, if these authors did not mistake the notion of it, and if a just distinction, that ought to be made, did not escape them.

Tradition is first oral, the first authors of it unknown, and when it comes afterward into history, the genealogical descent of it nothing more than tradition, and we must say, in general, very absurdly, that it proves itself, or, very truly, that it has no proof at all. From hence it follows, that particular circumstantial facts, conveyed to us by particular traditions, are destitute of historical proof. But still it will be agreeable to nature and reason, that the unanimous concurrence of many traditions, to which no contrary traditions can be opposed, may constitute the truth of a general fact. Publick report, as Pliny the younger observes, relates facts in the gross, and naked of circumstances. So it must do, to deserve any credit; and so does this tradition, that the world had a beginning. It is rather a fact, resulting from the concurrence of traditions, than a fact founded on the authority of any. Nothing can be less credible than all that we read in ancient story, about the Assyrians for instance. It is a wild heap

of

of inconsistent traditions which cannot be reconciled, nor verified for want of an historical criterion. Ctesias, it is said, boasted that he had extracted the materials of his history, while he was in the service of the king of Persia, out of the authentick records of that monarchy. But his account, those of other Greek writers, and even those of the Old Testament, are so contrary to one another, and, on the whole, so improbable, that they may be all comprehended under the name of Assyriacs, which Aristotle brought into proverbial use, and which was meant to signify all sorts of fabulous relations. What are we now to believe in this case? Not any particular tradition, to be sure; but thus much, in general, that there was an empire once founded in Asia, to which the Assyrians gave their name.

These traditions, those of Egypt, and many of Greece, come from those dark ages which may be called heroical or fabulous, after Varro the most learned of the Romans. More modern Greeks, like echoes, repeated these traditions, and, in repeating, multiplied them all, so that the sound of them rings still in our ears, and they remain objects of learned curiosity. Shall we give credit now to the traditions, that came down from fabulous ages, about the expedition of the Argonauts; about the war of Thebes, and that of Troy; about the adventures of Hercules, of Theseus, and a multitude of other romantic stories? No, most certainly. It would be ridiculous to give credit to any of them. But it is not ridiculous, it is reasonable, to be persuaded that

they had some foundation in the truth of things. Every tradition, considered apart, may be safely denied; because no one of them has an historical proof: but yet a truth, which may be called with little impropriety historical, results from the combination of all these fabulous traditions. There were, no doubt, in unknown ages, maritime expeditions, famous leagues, cruel wars, and heroes who rendered their names illustrious.

One tradition reports, that Perseus carried a colony into the east; another, that Tithonus did the same "usque ad Æthiopas," as far as the Indies. Is not the voyage of Io, daughter of Inachus, into Egypt long before, and the expedition of the Cimmerians into Asia long after, famous in tradition? Many others of the same kind might be mentioned; and though they are all fabulous, they leave no reason to doubt, that arts and sciences, and even barbarity, were carried from the west to the east, as well as from the east to the west, in ages quite unknown to us; which is enough to shake the authority of that particular history wherein it is reported, that the world was repeopled from one spot, and by one family, after a universal deluge. But I need insist on this head no longer. So many general truths, of which it is impossible to doubt, result from the concurrence of fabulous traditions, that there remains no reason to doubt of the truth of this fact, "The world had a beginning."

Will it be said, that if there has been such a tradition, it has not been so universal as to establish this truth, according to my rule? Lest this

should

should be said, it is necessary that I prove the universality of it; and that by showing, particularly, for what reasons we admit other facts to be true, though founded only on tradition, it may appear that the beginning of the world is still better founded, and this important tradition advantageously distinguished from all others.

While I am writing on this subject to you, a dissertation, I had never seen before, is fallen into my hands. The author * of it pretends not only to prove, that the world had a beginning, but also, that this beginning was the same which Moses gives it. He is so fond of the second proposition, that he employs all his skill and all his learning to establish it. He ventures to assert, that the history of the world was very well known, when that of Moses became publick by the spreading of the Gospel; that profane history agreed with sacred, in this respect, and did not reach beyond the bounds Moses had set. One would think, that these writers imagine, for this writer is a divine too, that none but themselves can read, and that they have still the advantage, which they had before the ressurrection of letters, the advantage of imposing whatever they please on an ignorant world. The world had a beginning; tradition proves it had. But tradition is far from proving that it began, either in the manner Moses relates, or at the time which he is thought to have fixed. Profane and sacred history were as little agreed, when christianity was published

* Jacquelot.

and the Jewish scriptures were better known, as they are at this time; notwithstanding all the pains taken by Josephus, Eusebius, and others, to reconcile them; and notwithstanding all the pains that have been taken, by modern scholars, to confirm sacred by profane anecdotes.

Let us neglect such writers, therefore, who make a show of learning, always futile, and often false. Let us examine and compare for ourselves; look into the authors they cite; but trust neither their citations nor their reasonings. Diodorus the Sicilian, and Strabo, in the reign of Augustus; Pliny and Plutarch in those of Vespasian and Trajan, very respectable authors certainly, give us a different idea of their knowledge in the history of the world, from that which the author of this dissertation would give us. They knew a little better than this modern writer, what histories and what traditions they had of any authenticity. They made no great account of those canticles or hymns, of those inscriptions and other expedients, which had been employed, in more early times, to preserve the memory of past events, and concerning which the writer we refer to enters into a chimerical and tiresome detail. These ancient writers looked on their histories to be more modern, and their traditions to be more ancient, than our tribe of scholars would make them, the last especially. That profound antiquity, wherein these men affect dogmatically to make great discoveries, with very particular and critical exactness, was, for the others, a dark abyss, wherein they saw but few objects, and those few rather

rather general than particular, and, on the whole very imperfect. They acknowledged, that the first of the Greek historians had writ no earlier than the time about which the Persians began to make their expeditions into Europe. They confessed, that neighbouring nations had some historical monuments of a much greater antiquity; but they confessed too, that these monuments were very imperfect and very precarious, broken into discordant anecdotes, and mingled up with romance and poetical fiction. In a word, they owned themselves able to pierce a very little way into antiquity; but none of them pretended, that the bounds of their historical knowledge were the bounds of antiquity. Let us see now, whether the beginning of the world may not be, even at this time, reputed equivalent to the best established historical fact, notwithstanding the avowed ignorance of the most learned and curious inquirers, who wrote, two thousand years ago, about the beginning of nations, and much more of the world.

The Egyptians seem to have been reputed the most ancient, or one of the most ancient, nations of the world, by the Greeks, from whom all our knowledge of profane history descends. They gave to their nation an immense antiquity, and in part, perhaps, fabulous. But I am at a loss, however, to discover what means, and therefore what right, the scholars of these ages have to decide, as dogmatically as they have done, about the Egyptian dynasties. Why, for instance, the jesuit Petavius required that we should, upon his word,

reject them all? Or, why the author of the dissertation, after touching the matter very lightly and very superficially, should expect to be believed, when he conjectures that there were no monuments of Egyptian antiquity later than Moeris, though he has in this the authority of as great a man as Marsham on his side? Dicearchus, the disciple of Aristotle, who had not, most certainly, inspired him with much credulity in ancient tradition, had studied the antiquities of Egypt. Manetho had done the same in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and Eratosthenes in the time of Ptolemy Evergetes. The first of the two was himself an Egyptian, and had extracted his chronology and history from the books of Mercury, that is, from the sacred and most authentick writings of the Egyptians. Why has his chronology been called in question, or why was it not received by christian writers beyond a certain epocha? is there any pretence to say, that he altered what he found in the books of Mercury; as we know that Julius Africanus, and Eusebius, altered and transposed his dynasties, to make them, as near as they could, conformable to the Mosaick chronology? With what front can we suspect the authenticity of books, compiled and preserved by Egyptian priests, when we receive the Old Testament on the faith of Jewish scribes, a most ignorant and lying race? Were the sacred books of the Egyptians taken from them by a king of Persia? Diodorus says it. But the same Diodorus assures us, that the Egyptians purchased their scriptures again, and

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that they were restored to them by the eunuch Bagoas: whereas the scriptures of the Jews were lost, more than once; and how they were recovered, the last time at least, is unknown to us: nay, whether they were recovered at all, in a strict sense, may be, and has been, questioned by some Christians and Jews too. Is the immense antiquity, which Manetho ascribed to his nation, or the tales of Osiris, and Isis, and Typhon, too ridiculous to be admitted? I shall not plead in favour of them. But, in truth, are the anecdotes of Jewish antiquity a whit more conformable to experience, to reason, and to all our notions of things divine or human, whatever regard we may pay to some passages in the Pentateuch, because of the use to which they are put by theology. No man, who has the least pretence to candour, and who dares speak out, will assert so much. But still, how little credit soever we may give to the particular traditions of either sort, all of them together are the general voice of antiquity, and extort our assent to this truth, "The world had a beginning"

This truth seems to have been propagated by them in those hieroglyphs, and that sacred language, wherein they recorded whatever was most ancient and most respected. Horus, or the world, was represented like a youth whose beard was not yet grown. An egg was the famous symbol of the generation, as well as figure of the world; and the Thebans, who were the most ancient Egyptian dynasty, had a hieroglyphical representation

of the Divinity with an egg coming out of his mouth; which symbol of an egg was adopted by the Phœnicians, and by the Persians, and became an object of worship in the orgia, or mysteries of Bacchus. These monuments came down from the first Mercury, at whose antiquity we cannot so much as guess; for the second, who followed, and probably very long after him, our chronologers are obliged to place as high as the age of Moses or of Joshua.

Sanchoniathon, that we may say something of Phœnician as well as Egyptian traditions of this sort, is another author that may vie, perhaps, with the most ancient for antiquity. Bochart, and all our divines, think fit to place him in the time of Gideon. It is not convenient for them, that he should stand backwarder. They build their assertion on a passage concerning him in the writings of Porphyry, who says, that Sanchoniathon had the materials of his history from Jerombal, a priest of the god Jao. Now Jerombal sounds too like to Jerubaal, the name Gideon wears in Scripture, and Jao sounds too like Jehovah, to leave any doubt on this subject in the minds of men who can make systems and write volumes on the affinity of sounds. Sanchoniathon then, being contemporary to Gideon, had a knowledge of the book of Moses, and took from thence all he knew concerning the beginning of the world; so that these two are but one and the same tradition, according to this opinion. But there is great reason to doubt of the first

part,

part, and the second is evidently false.—The anachronism of Porphyry, who supposed Semiramis contemporary with the siege of Troy, will not make Sanchoniathon contemporary with Gideon; since the last was, unluckily, not a priest, and since the Jerombal, from whose writings the Phœnician historian is said to have borrowed, was one. The answers made to this objection are trifling. A pagan, it is said, might take a general of an army for a priest, and Porphyry was guilty of this blunder. The Jews called their chiefs or principal men sometimes priests, it is said. Therefore Porphyry, who was no more a Jew than he was a Christian, might make use of an appellation peculiar to the Jews.—But, further, in what time soever Sanchoniathon lived, he did not relate what he said concerning the commencement of the world from the Mosaick history, or any other Jewish traditions; since he affirmed positively, that he derived the cosmogony from Taaut or Mercury. Have we not reason to be surprised, as much as we are accustomed to it, at the boldness of scholars, who presume to oppose their frivolous conjectures to what an historian himself says of the materials which he followed? The second part of what is said concerning this Phœnician historian being false, it follows that Sanchoniathon, one of the most ancient writers whose name is come down to us, Sanchoniathon, a lover and follower of truth, according to the etymology of his name, learned and curious in searching the original of things, furnished with the most

most authentick materials that Egypt and Phœnicia could afford him, and writing in an age when the authenticity of these materials might be known, affirmed the beginning of the world; and is, therefore, a voucher of the same truth, distinct from Moses.

Whether the books of the Pentateuch were writ by Moses himself, or whether the traditions contained in them were compiled after his time, which is not at all improbable; certain it is, that these traditions are of very great antiquity. Now these traditions confirm the same general fact, in a more circumstantial account of it, than we may suppose that Sanchoniathon gave. I have read that Simplicius laughed at the whole story, and at Grammaticus for quoting some passages of it. This interpreter of Aristotle affirmed, that the whole was taken from Egyptian fables. But Simplicius might have considered, as we do, that how ridiculous soever the circumstances might be, the fact, affirmed by so many traditions, might be true, though he was led to deny it by arguments which Aristotle himself owned to be very problematical. Aristotle, who employed logick very absurdly in physicks, might employ it, as absurdly, about history and tradition. Let it be, that the account Moses gives of the creation, and the cosmogony of Sanchoniathon, are alike fabulous; yet still the general fact, advanced by them, may be reputed true. The various fables annexed to it do, in effect, prove it; since it is not likely that they would have been

been invented, if the foundation of them had not been laid in tradition, if there had not been a stock of truth whereon to graft them.

I am as much persuaded, as Simplicius himself, that the Israelites might borrow some Egyptian traditions, as it is notorious that they borrowed many civil and religious institutions from the same people. I can believe too, on the faith of learned men, that there is some analogy between the Mosaick account of the creation and the Phœnician cosmogony. There is nothing extraordinary to alter the state of the question in this. I can believe too, that the six times, in which God made the world, according to an ancient tradition of the Persians, are relative to the six days in which he made it, according to the Jewish traditions. The Israelites had been slaves to the Egyptians, captives among the Chaldeans, and subjects to the Persians. They boasted their descent from Abraham; and the magi acknowledged this patriarch for their legislator, and for the institutor of their religion. The reformation, which Zoroaster made in this, was made after the return of some of the Jews, from Babylon, into their own country. But it was made, according to Hide and other modern criticks, in the reign of Darius, son of Hystaspes, a little before Esdras and Nehemias went from the court of Persia to restore the religion, to settle the government, and to compile the traditions of the Jews at Jerusalem. Esdras set out from Persia and Babylonia when the disputes between the magians and the sabians

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ran the highest, and when the new doctrines of Zoroaster prevailed in the first fervour of reformation. Esdras, therefore, and the other Jews, who could not fail to be favourable to the first sect, and averse to the latter, might very well take, as it is highly probable that they did, the names of the months, the names of angels, many ridiculous anecdotes, and, among the rest, some concerning the creation, from the magians. The tradition was common to all these nations, but they invented and they borrowed, from one another, various circumstances, in which they dressed it up differently, each historian according to his fancy, and conformably to the established system of his religion. This hypothesis is so well founded, and so very probable, that our divines do nothing better than weaken the credibility of the fact, when they assume, on the similitude of some circumstances, that this tradition, as well as the belief of one God, was preserved by the Jews alone.

They were both much more ancient among the Persians than Zoroaster or Zerdusht. We have to do here only with the first: and as to that, Porphyry cites in his treatise, "De antro nympharum," a certain Eubulus, who writ the history of Mithras, and assured in it, that Zoroaster consecrated a round grotto, such as nature had formed it, adorned with flowers and watered by springs, to Mithras, the creator of all things, which grotto was the symbol of the world, as the world is the work of Mithras. The same

reformer

reformer instituted festivals likewise to commemorate the beginning of it; and not content with this, he descended into particulars; fixed the number of days contained in every one of the six times that had been imagined; and marked the gradual progress of the creation in each of them.

The Chaldæans may be coupled, on this occasion, with the Persians, as the Phœnicians and the Israelites were with the Egyptians. They were all distinct nations; they had all their distinct religions and traditions; but they all agreed in one, the beginning of the world, how many different fictions soever they might relate concerning the time and manner of this beginning. I do not cite the Chaldaick oracles. They were as much forged or corrupted, perhaps, as the sybiline verses. But we have no need of leaning on their authority. Eusebius has preserved a remarkable passage that was in the history of Berosus. An ancient tradition of the Chaldæans reported, that our world was formed out of a chaos. All was night and water, till Bel cut this night in two, separated the heavens from the earth, and formed the world. The stars, the sun, the moon, and the planets, were the productions, according to this tradition, of the same Bel, by which name the Chaldæans meaned to signify the Kneph of the orthodox Egyptians, their own invisible Mithras, or, in one word, the supreme Being.

I know very well that Diodorus says, the Chaldæans

dæans believed the world eternal by it's nature, and incapable of generation or corruption. But, in the first place, the authority of Berosus seems to deserve, on this occasion, much more credit than that of Diodorus, not only because he was much nearer to the times of which he speaks, but because he was a Babylonian and a priest, and, therefore, better instructed, without doubt, than the latter in the traditions of his own country.—In the next place, the difficulty of reconciling these two authors does not seem insuperable. The Greek, in the beginning of his first book, speaks of those, who believed the world eternal, and of those, who were of a contrary opinion. But this dispute seems to have risen among the naturalists or the learned, as he calls them, and not among those who contented themselves to know, about past events, what the history and tradition of their country taught them.——Thus we may understand, and should, I think, understand what he says of the Chaldæans; for after having said, that they maintained the eternity of the world, and believed it incapable of generation or corruption, he adds, that they believed the world to be governed by a divine providence, and every thing which happened, to be ordered by the gods, not to happen by chance. Now the greatest part of what he says being manifestly an account of philosophical opinions, and not of facts preserved in history or in tradition, it seems most natural to understand the whole in the same manner;

beside

beside which, it is to be considered, that there might be a tradition of the commencement, and that there could be none of the eternity of the world. From all which, it seems evident to me, that the whole of what Diodorus says is applicable to philosophical opinions alone, which are sometimes opposed to matters of fact sufficiently established; whereas every such hypothesis should have it's foundation in fact, not to be chimerical. Berosus relates what he found in the Chaldaick traditions; and Diodorus tells us what the opinions were of some philosophers at least. We shall see presently, that this opposition of a philosophical hypothesis to tradition was not confined to Egypt or Chaldæa, and that it does not affect the truth of the proposition we defend.

Strabo relates, in his fifteenth book, that the Brachmans in India agreed with the Greeks in many things, and particularly in this, that "the world had a beginning; to which he adds, and that "it will be destroyed." Advantage may be taken from hence to turn my own way of reasoning against me. It may be said, that, since the Brachmans believed the future destruction of the world, which could not be the subject of any tradition, and was not certainly revealed to them by prophecy, the assumed commencement of the world might be, and certainly was, merely founded, as well as it's assumed destruction, on their philosophical speculations.

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It may be said, that we ought to explain this passage of Strabo, much as I have explained that of Diodorus, and to suppose the whole system of these Indian Brachmans philosophical.

I shall have occasion to consider, more at length, the true difference between a tradition of opinion, and a tradition of fact. But, in the mean time, I observe, that since the opinion of the future destruction of the world, founded manifestly in speculation, was entertained by the Greeks, at the same time as the opinion of it's beginning, founded not less manifestly in tradition; and since Strabo assures us, that there was a great conformity between the opinions of the Greeks, and the opinions of the Indians, we may well believe, that there was the same conformity between the principles on which their opinions were framed. Those among the Greeks, who believed the world had a beginning, believed it on the faith of tradition. They who imagined it would have an end, were led to imagine so both by physical and metaphysical speculation. Since they were sure it had a beginning, they concluded, from both, that it would have an end, and grafted opinion on fact. Thus it happened among the Greeks, and thus it might happen among the Indians.

I observe, in the next place, that if there was any author of equal authority, who asserted that the Brachmans believed the eternity of the world, to oppose to Strabo, as we have Berosus,

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to oppose to Diodorus, this circumstance might afford some pretence to say that the Brachmans, having framed, from observations of the present state of the material world, an opinion that t would be some time or other destroyed by age or accident, were led from thence, by carrying their speculations backward, to the opinion that it had a beginning: but that as there is no such authority to oppose to Strabo, we ought to conclude, that the knowledge they had by tradition of the beginning of the world led them to believe, on physical observation and metaphysical reasoning, it's future destruction, rather than to conclude this philosophical conjecture led them to imagine, without any foundation in tradition, that the world had a beginning. So that I might very well quote the Indians, as an ancient nation who concurred in establishing the truth of this fact on the faith of their traditions.

I might go further on to the eastward, and bring the testimony of the Chinese, on the same side: a most ancient nation surely, and possessed of more ancient records, perhaps, than any other, though we have been little acquainted till very lately with their history, chronology, and traditions. But I choose to proceed in quoting authors better known to us, and shall therefore cite once more Strabo, whose authority, of all the ancient writers, is perhaps of the greatest weight. Strabo represents the Æthiopians rather barbarous than civilized; and yet this people believed a supreme immortal Being, the first cause

of all things. This people therefore believed the beginning of the world, and this people could not fail to have most ancient traditions, since, as rude as they were, the use of letters had been known by them from a time immemorial. Enough has been said of the most ancient nations that are mentioned in history; and if we descend to the Greeks, modern, with respect to them, though ancient, with respect to us, we shall find the same tradition established, and further reasons to persuade that it was universal, allegorised, disguised, disputed, and even weakened by time; but still universally received, and strongest as we remount highest in our inquiries after it. Such it was when the Greeks, from whom it has descended to us, adopted and transmitted it. This tradition seems to rise out of the abyss of time with the impetuosity of a great source. But then as the water, which spouted out with much noise and force in the beginning, runs silently and gently on, the further it runs; so this tradition grew weaker, but continued to run, when the authors, whom we read at this time, began to write.

The Egyptians were the first masters of the Greeks. Before any of these went into Egypt to acquire science, they had received much instruction from thence; principles of religion and of civil government, and anecdotes of antiquity. Orpheus may pass for the first of these Egyptian missionaries; since he came from Egypt, though he was a Thracian. I abandon the verses, which

have

have gone under his name, as easily as the Chaldaick oracles; but that I should believe there was no such man, is too much to require. Aristotle asserted, as we learn in the first book of the nature of the gods, "Orpheum poetam nunquam "fuisse." But we find in the same treatise, that Orpheus, Musæus, Hesiod, and Homer, were reckoned among the most ancient poets. It would not be difficult, perhaps, to discover the principle of philosophical interest, which induced Aristotle to deny the existence of a man so famous in all the traditions of his country, and who had been the subject of so many fables. What traditions of greater antiquity than Orpheus the Greeks might have, we know not. But he was certainly the principal channel, through which that of the commencement of the world passed, from the Egyptians, to Musæus, Hesiod, and Homer, who received it first, or were confirmed in the belief of it, by this authority, and who preserved and propagated it in all their songs. Pythagoras took it from the Egyptians likewise, and from other eastern nations. The whole Italick school, and all those of the Ionick, who did not prefer their own speculations to a matter of fact, and Plato, the famous founder of the academy, followed them. None of these invented the fact; but all of them dressed it up and delivered it down in different garbs, according to their different systems of philosophy and religion. Even the Christians, who came so long afterward, helped to corrupt this tradition, by interpolating the famous verses,

ascribed to Orpheus, which I have for this reason, among others, consented to lay aside; though still, if we believe these verses were composed by Onomacritus, and not by Orpheus, they were composed at least as early as the age of Pisistratus, and contain, therefore, a very ancient tradition.

I might have named, as the preservers of this tradition, among the Greeks, Linus, Thamyras, and others. I might quote several Theogonias, that, it is said, were writ, like that of Aristæus of the island of Proconnesus, or that of Epimenides of the island of Crete: all which would have been more ridiculous, than they were if the beginning of the world had not been established in general belief; but I will mention, particularly, that of Hesiod only. He invokes the muses to sing the divine race of those immortal gods born of the earth, of the heavens, and of night, and who have been nourished by the salt sea. He goes on to bid them sing, how the gods and the earth were first made, with the rivers and the immense sea, with the stars and the heavens, with the gods who proceeded from them, and who are the authors of all good things. The same extravagant ideas are to be found in Homer. The ocean was, according to him, the original of all things: and this notion coincides with that of Thales, who taught that all things proceeded from water as their material principle; by which he meaned, no doubt, a certain chaos, wherein all the elements were confounded, till they were reduced into order, that is, till the world began.

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The proofs of the universality of this tradition, muffled up almost always in allegories and fables, are so numerous, that we run more risk of being lost in the multiplicity of them, than of wanting any. Abaris, the Scythian, had writ concerning these generations of gods. The world was not eternal in the system of the Druids; and the ancient Etrurians had their fables concerning the beginning of it, as well as the Egyptians and the Persians. The magi, says Diogenes Laertius, taught the generation of the gods: and by these gods, they understood fire, earth, and water. One of the magi, says Herodotus, sung the same generation, in a hymn, at all the sacrifices of the Persians.

As poetry personified every thing, ancient philosophy, which was little else than poetry, animated all the elements; and every part of corporeal nature was filled with inferiour divinities: for they acknowledged some that were superiour, and even a supreme Being, who, far from being born of the world, made it, and was the father of gods and men; which puts me in mind of a passage in Cicero, where it is said of thiss upreme Being, "deos alios in terrâ, alios in "lunâ, alios in reliquas mundi partes spargens "Deus quasi serebat."

It would have been very convenient for all the atheistical philosophers to have assumed the eternity of the world; but few of them durst do so, in opposition to this universality of tradition. They were obliged, therefore, either

to reject this tradition, or to find some way of accounting for the existence of our planet, without supposing a self-existent Δημιϋργος, or architect, the first mind of Anaxagoras. They chose the last, as the most easy task; and Epicurus seemed to think his absurd system more likely to prevail, for this very reason, because it assumed that the world had a beginning conformably to tradition. The author of the dissertation, I have before me, asserts, that all the philosophers, except the Epicureans, under which name he comprehends all the atomick philosophers, held, that the world was eternal. A passage in the beginning of the fourth chapter of the treatise of Censorinus, "De die natali," led him into this errour. What he advances may be proved false by a deduction of many particulars; but this may be said, with truth, that an opinion of the eternity of the world grew up or spread more after Aristotle. Even the latter Platonicians took part on this head with the Peripatetics. They treated their master, as St. Jerom accuses others, and might have been accused himself, of treating the Scriptures. Whatever new opinions philosophers framed, they dragged in the text of their masters to support them; which calls to my mind the proceedings of a Jew and of a stoical philosopher. Philo found a trinity of divine hypostases in the writings of Plato. He adopted the opinion, would needs find it in the said sacred writings of his fathers, and reconcile the legislator of the Jews with the founder

of

of the academy. Just so Cleanthes endeavoured to make the fables of Orpheus, Musæus, Hesiod, and Homer agree with what he taught concerning the gods, " Ut veterrimi poetæ, qui hæc ne sus-" picati quidem sint, stoici fuisse videantur*." But after all, nothing can be more strongly asserted than the commencement of the world is by Plato; and even Aristotle himself acknowledged, that this philosopher thought it generated.

It may seem strange, but it is true, that we have a right to quote Aristotle himself against the eternity of the world. He falls severely on the philosophical systems, that prevailed in his time, about the manner in which it began: but he acknowledges the uniformity of this ancient tradition. How could he avoid to do so? Or how could it be otherwise, since the Greeks, in his time, had found it established among all the nations with whom they became acquainted either by commerce or by war? That happened to them, which has happened to us, in much later ages. We have pushed our discoveries through both hemispheres, and have found every where the same tradition established in the belief of mankind. The Chinese, whom I just mentioned above, would pass, like the Egyptians of old, for the most ancient race of mankind, and they have traditions and records of immense antiquity and very singular authenticity. Now these traditions and these records agree, in one general fact,

* Tully de Nat. Deor. l. 2.

with all those that have been mentioned, " the " world and mankind had a beginning." Even the name of a first man is preserved, and Fohi, who was the Orpheus of the east, precedes a very little their historical age. If we cross the South-sea, and visit the people of Peru or of Mexico, we find the same tradition established by universal consent, as they received it from their fathers. The world began, and Pacha Camac created it; the sun, that enlightens the world now, is not eternal; there have been other suns before this. If we cross the continent of America and proceed to the islands, we find the inhabitants of them in the same belief; at least we might have found them so, while they preserved the primitive simplicity of their manners, and the traditions of their forefathers, and till Spanish avarice and Spanish bigotry had exterminated the whole species.

After saying so much concerning this tradition, it is necessary, I think, to consider, more particularly, what those principles are, on which reason determines us to receive general facts that have no foundation out of tradition, as we receive the most authentick historical truths. I have touched this subject already; but to treat it with more order and clearness, let us descend into some detail of the essential differences between history and tradition. Let us consider what those attributes are, which the latter wants, and for the want of which this testimony cannot produce historical probability: for if we find that there is not the same necessity of relation between these at-

tributes and the general facts, spoken of here, as there is between these attributes and every historical account of past events; in short, if we find that such general facts are not in the case of those, in order to judge of which the rules of historical criticism have been established, it will follow, that these facts may be received for true, as well as any, and much better than several of those that are contained in history, and to the truth of which we assent.

A story, circumstantially related, ought not to be received, on the faith of tradition; since the least reflection on human nature is sufficient to show, how unsafely a system of facts and circumstances can be trusted for it's preservation to memory alone, and for it's conveyance to oral report alone; how liable it must be to all those alterations, which the weakness of the human mind must cause necessarily, and which the corruption of the human heart will be sure to suggest. An event that is not circumstantially, is imperfectly related, not only with respect to the communication it should give, but with respect to the means we should have to judge of it's probability. The means I speak of are those of comparing the different parts of a story together, and of examining how well they coincide and render the whole consistent. In one case, then, different circumstances are to be compared; in the other, all the traditions that can be collected on the same subject. Inconsistent circumstances destroy the credit of the story; repugnant

nant traditions, that of a general event. But the silence of some histories or of some traditions will destroy the credit of neither, when all those who speak of the same thing agree. The Jewish history has preserved the memory of a Babylonian kingdom, which we call the second empire of the Assyrians, unknown to profane history and tradition, which make mention only of one. That ancient monument too of Rhamses, which Germanicus went to see in his voyage into Egypt, and the inscription on it, which contained the names of all the nations whom this prince had conquered in Asia, makes no mention of the Assyrians among those who became tributary to the Egyptian empire, as if their very name had not been known a century before the æra of Nabonassar, though it mentions the Persians, the Bactrians, and others, who must have been such to the Assyrians, if an Assyrian empire had been established, as we assume, before the æra of Nabonassar. Notwithstanding this silence and the vain efforts of scholars to reconcile sacred and profane Assyriacs, it would be unreasonable to deny, that there was an Assyrian empire in Asia. Upon the whole matter, that "the world had a begin-" ning" is a general fact, even better founded than this, "there has been an Assyrian monarchy." Some ancient traditions, we have seen, do not concur with others about the latter. But I presume it would be hard to cite any body of ancient traditions, wherein the commencement of the world is not directly affirmed, or constantly supposed.

supposed. There is not even the silence of tradition against it: and as to traditions that deny the fact, there neither have been, nor could be, any.

It may be thought, and it is true, in general, that history has this advantage over tradition. The authors of authentick history are known; but those of tradition, whether authentick or unauthentick, are not known. The probability of facts muſt diminish by length of time, and can be estimated at no time higher than the value of that original authority, from which it is derived. This advantage, then, authentick history has, which no tradition can have. The degree of assent, which we give to history, may be settled, in proportion to the number, characters, and circumstances of the original witnesses; the degrees of assent to tradition cannot be so settled. Let us see, therefore, how far this difference may be thought to affect the tradition of the beginning of the world. We shall find, I think, that we are very liable to be deceived in all these respects, which should constitute the authenticity of history, and that the difference I have observed cannot effect in any sort the true fact I assert.

We are deceived, grossly, very often about the number of witnesses, two ways. Sometimes by applying testimonies that have no true relation to the things testified, and sometimes by taking different repetitions of the same testimony for different testimonies. Both these ways

ways are employed with success, artfully by some, habitually by others; and numerous citations improperly brought, and carelessly or ignorantly set to account, to increase the confusion and to promote the deception. Nothing can be more ridiculous, perhaps, than to see a great part of what we find in profane antiquity applied to confirm what we find in sacred. Numerous and astonishing examples of this kind might be brought from all the writers, who have endeavoured to establish the authenticity of Jewish, by a supposed concurrence of profane traditions. But I pass these over. It is full as ridiculous to see all the ancient writers, who have spoke of the Assyrians and Persians, quoted as so many distinct witnesses, when they did, for the most part, nothing more than copy Ctesias first, and one another afterward. Neither Ctesias, nor Moses himself, may deserve belief in all the particulars related by them; but Ctesias may be reckoned as a witness the more of some general facts, as Moses may be of some others.

That the world had a beginning is a naked fact, which neither contains nor implies any thing equivocal. It neither leans on the authority of one nation, nor of one system of traditions which many nations may adopt. Nations, the most distant in place, and the most opposite in opinions, customs, and manners, concur in affirming it. All these traditions, therefore, have had different originals, or they all proceed from one original tradition.

tradition. If they had different originals, the truth of the fact is established by so great a number of independent testimonies. If they all proceed from one original tradition, the truth of the fact is established just as well; since such a tradition must have been that of one first family or society. As it would be absurd to assume that a tradition, which may be called that of mankind, could be founded originally in any thing else than the truth of a fact which concerned all mankind, and of which all mankind had once had a certain assurance; so it would be absurd to suppose, that a tradition, arising in one family or society alone, could spread to all the corners of the Earth, and be received alike by nations even unknown to one another, unless we suppose this family or society to be that from which all these nations, by whom this tradition was preserved, proceeded. It does not seem that this argument can be eluded.

As there is a great difference between circumstantial relations and general naked facts, so there is, likewise, between the tradition I contend for, and every other of the same kind. That there has been a universal deluge is a fact, as general and as naked as this, "the world had a beginning;" but I apprehend, that the tradition of it is not supported like that of the commencement of the world. Has the memory of this event been preserved among all the ancient nations? There are men bold enough to say so; but the contrary is true. The tradition of Noah's deluge is vouched by no other authority than that of Moses: for those

those nations, which preserved the memory of so many particular deluges, knew nothing of this universal deluge: and yet it is impossible to conceive that the memory of such a catastrophe should have been known only by one people, and and that not the most ancient neither; or, being known to all, should have been preserved only in one corner of the Earth. If this tradition then is liable to suspicion, for want of a sufficient number of testimonies, that of the commencement of the world is liable to no suspicion; because it has as many testimonies as can be expected on the supposition of it's truth. Let us proceed now to consider the veracity and probity of witnesses, and the difference between history and tradition on this head. History, to be authentick, must give us not only the means of knowing the number, but of knowing the characters, of the witnesses who vouch for it. Tradition in general gives us the means of knowing neither; and the particular tradition we speak of here, which is that of nations, not of men, does not stand in need of the latter.

This condition of historical probability is even more important than the number of witnesses; and it is by this that we are most liable to be deceived. There are certain follies, which prevail sometimes like epidemical maladies, and infect whole nations with their delirium. Such there were, of one sort, among the Egyptians; such there were, of another sort, among the Jews; and the predestination to universal empire may pass for another, among the Romans. But whatever various effects different deliri-

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ums may produce in different countries, there is one which they produce alike in all, the spirit of inventing, believing, and propagating lies. These lies come soon to have education and authority on their side. It becomes the interest of particular men, or of particular societies, to profit of the publick credulity, and when they have once done so, their lies produce such effects, under the management of bold and artful men, as sober truth never could. Thus Mahomet, to go no higher, instituted a new religion in the seventh century of ours, and founded a great empire. Mahomet had intrepidity as well as address, and if a miserable Jew of Asia Minor, seventy or eighty years ago, had not wanted the former, we might have seen, very possibly, at this hour a new spiritual and temporal empire established by the adorers of a new Messiah. But the courage of Sabatai Sevi, to whom the Jews resorted from all parts, in a firm persuasion that he was their true Messiah, failed him, and he passes for an impostor, merely because he durst not stand an impalement. Thus not only lies, but whole systems of lies, get into history; pass for religious truths; and serve to support, by appeals to them in after-times, the original fraud. Mahomet was obliged to fly from Mecca to Medina by the unbelieving Arabs. But the Arabs now, and all those who have been converted to mahometism, (for it would be false to say, though we hear it continually said, that this religion has been propagated by force alone and not by persuasion) go very devoutly in pilgrimage to the place from which

which he was driven, and the time of his flight is become their sacred æra.

I dwell the longer on this point, because it is that which justifies historical pyrrhonism the most. The ancient manner of recording events made it easy to practise all these frauds. The priests in Egypt, in Judæa, and elsewhere, were intrusted to make and to keep these records; and they were under a double obligation, if I may say so, for such they thought it no doubt, to keep them with greater regard to the system of religion, whose ministers they were, than to the truth of things. They were to keep up the credit of ancient lies, and to invent as many new ones, as were necessary to propagate the same fraud. By these means, and on these motives, the whole of history was corrupted in those nations, as we shall easily believe that it could not fail to be, when we consider the connexity between civil and ecclesiastical affairs, and their mutual influence on one another. Josephus, writing against Appion, praises this manner of preserving the memory of things, in order to bespeak approbation to the practice, which was that of his own country. He boasts much of the sincerity, and even of the inspiration, if I mistake not, of the Jewish scribes. But good sense founded in experience will answer, that they who record matters, concerning which they are strongly biassed by their affections, their passions and their prejudices, and wherein they have, directly, or indirectly, an immediate and great private interest to serve by invent-

inventing falsehoods, or by disguising truth, are never to be received as good witnesses, unless their testimony be confirmed by collateral and disinterested evidence. That they are not to be received as such, on any other terms, we need go no further than the Jews themselves for examples. Some of their heroes and heroines may be thought justly, when we consider the anachronisms and the blunders they commit, as fictitious as Amadis of Gaul, and their traditions no more authentick than those of archbishop Turpin.

The uncertainty of history arises principally from the causes here laid down. We are less liable to be deceived by the concurrence of authors, more independent and more indifferent than these, though they may not be all of equal credit: because when their motives and designs are not the same, when they had no common principle, and when they cannot be suspected to have had any concert together, nothing but the notoriety of facts can make their relations coincide. In such cases a nice examination of the veracity and probity of historians, when we can make it, is as little necessary as it is in matters of tradition, where we cannot make it. We may subscribe, at least as reasonably, to the united testimony of a great number of traditions, whose authors are unknown to us, as we may to facts reported by a great number of historians, though the authority of some of these would be otherwise very precarious.

Experience shows sufficiently, that there is no falsehood too gross to be imposed on any people civilised or barbarous, learned or ignorant, but we shall never conceive that the same lie could be imposed on all people: because it is impossible that the same lie should flatter them all alike, or be equally well proportioned to the interest and designs of a prevalent society in every nation. What immediate or necessary relation has the beginning of the world to the predominant folly of the Egyptians, for instance, or the Chinese, or to the interest of the priests, among the former, and any of the several sects, among the latter? Since they believed the world to have had a beginning; it was very conformable to the folly of these two people to insist that they descended from the first men, and were the most ancient nations of the world; but what need had they to assume the commencement of it? Would they not have flattered their vanity more to say, that it was eternal, and that their race was coeternal with it?——Once more. What necessary relation had the beginning of the world to the favourite principle of the Jews, who believed themselves a people chosen by God, out of all the people of the Earth? Could the eternity of the world make it less likely that they descended from Sem, or the vocation of Abraham more improbable, or destroy the credibility of any fact that flattered their vanity? I confess, I think not. If it be said, that this nation had nobler ideas of the supreme Being

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than any other; and that it was more conformable to these ideas to believe that the world was made by God, than that it is eternal as well as he; I might deny the first proposition, and show that no nation had such mean ideas of the Divinity in many respects as this. But if I admitted it, for argument sake, I might ask how this philosophical opinion could be passed for a matter of fact on the Egyptians, who boasted so much of their own antiquity, by a people, who had grown up among them, and who had been so long their slaves? If this tradition of the beginning of the world had prevailed among the Jews first, who were known to few people, and despised by those that knew them, how came it to spread far and wide to the utmost extremities of the east and west?—Since I have named the west, let me mention the Peruvians, and ask how the beginning of the world can be said to have flattered the general folly of this people, or the particular interest of their incas? They thought their incas the children of the sun. To what purpose was it to make them believe that Pacha Camac was a being superiour to the sun, and that he created the world? Would it not have been more agreeable to the prejudices of the Peruvians, and to the interests of the incas, to have supposed the world eternal, and themselves the offspring of an eternal father?

Lies, that are produced by the predominant passions of people, and by the policy of those

who lead them, carry for the most part on their fronts, if I may say so, the marks of their original: and this observation will hold in a multitude of instances that may be brought from history and tradition, both from facts circumstantially related, and from those that are naked, or almost naked of circumstances. But the tradition that affirms the beginning of the world is not in this case. It is relative no more to the particular character of one people than of another. It favours no more one general principle of religion or policy than another. In a word, force your imagination as much as you please, you will find insurmountable difficulties in your way, if you suppose the fact invented: but all these difficulties vanish when you suppose it true. The universal consent of mankind follows naturally and necessarily the truth of the fact. The antiquity of the tradition is a consequence of the antiquity of the world, and the great variety of fables, which have been invented about it, is a circumstance that accompanies every event that has descended long in oral tradition, and that has not been ascertained by contemporary history, nay, even some that seem to have been so ascertained.

There remains to be spoken of, another condition of historical probability, which it may be supposed that tradition cannot have, and which we have seen, in the case of numbers, and veracity or probity of witnesses, that history itself does not always furnish, and for want of which we are often imposed upon by it. This condition

condition is so essential, that neither the numbers nor characters of witnesses will constitute probability without it. The condition I mean is this; that the original authors were not only contemporary but competent witnesses. The examination whether they were such or no may be reckoned for another advantage, which history has, or must have, to be deemed authentick, over tradition, by what passes every day, under our eyes, when we see almost every publick fact related, and even transmitted to posterity, not according to truth, but according to the wrong judgments which are made by prejudice or by passion. What happens now, happened formerly, and no stronger proof of it can be required than that which we find in Arrian. He had before him the memorials of Aristobulus and of Ptolemy, two principal captains that accompanied Alexander in all his expeditions; and yet the historian was puzzled, sometimes, by the inconsistency of their relations.

On this head, the competency of original witnesses, it may be said, that if history wants it sometimes, tradition must want it always, and that tradition, especially, which I defend. I may be told, and I was told, that if every thing else, which I have advanced, was admitted, the objection, arising from the incompetency of witnesses, would be sufficient to refute me. It was urged, that whoever were the first to say there had been a monarchy of the Assyrians, might know the truth of what they said, but that they,

who were the first to affirm the beginning of the world, could not know the truth of what they said, not even on the supposition that they were the first of men. This tradition, therefore, is that of an opinion, not of fact. The existence of God is a tradition too; and theists, very often, appeal to the universality of this tradition to prove the truth of an opinion, just as you appeal to the same universality to prove a fact. Had you proved the fact, you might have drawn from it all the arguments that can be drawn to establish, in belief, the existence of a supreme Being. But you have amused yourself with nothing better than proving the truth of one opinion, by the tradition of another, which is a proceeding that cannot be justified; because we are as able, and probably more able judges of the opinion, than any of the ancient nations could be witnesses of the fact. As different nations have their different follies, there are some common to all mankind. As there are fictions which favour the interests and promote the designs of those who govern in all the countries of the world, the existence of one supreme Being has been acknowledged in all ages, and if you please to say so, by all people. Superstition took hold, and policy profited of this opinion, under one form or other. Superstition abounds wherever there are men, and some kind of policy wherever there are societies. Metaphysical reasonings on the nature and attributes of a supreme Being, may persuade philosophers that this Being, whom they

they assume to exist by the necessity of his nature, created the world, which does not seem so to exist. Naturalists in particular may have adopted easily an opinion, which saves them much pains and useless research. A first cause of infinite wisdom and power cuts all the gordian knots that embarrass them, and a single supposition furnishes the solution of a thousand difficulties.—All this was urged with much vehemence by Damon, and he concluded by putting this dilemma. If the opinion of the commencement of the world is conformable to the knowledge we have of things, and proportioned to the human understanding, as you assert, there results from thence no proof that the fact is true, but great reason to believe, that men might assume it, without knowing any thing of the matter. On the other side, if this be not true, your universal tradition wants the first and principal foundation of probability, which you have laid down.

I have put these objections, such as were made, and such as might have been made to me, in their full force. They seem plausible; let us see if they are unanswerable. They will not appear so, if I can show first, that the atheist begs the question, when he assumes, that, supposing the world to have had a beginning, even the first of men could not be competent witnesses, because they could not be competent judges, of the truth of the fact; secondly, if I can state so clearly the distinction to be made between

the tradition of an opinion, and the tradition of a fact, in our judgments about them, as to reduce to an absurdity the supposition, that the tradition we speak of is of the first sort; and thirdly, if I can prove, by reasons drawn from the human nature and from general experience, that unless the world had really had a beginning, the opinion of it's eternity would have been the opinion of all antiquity, and the commencement of it would not have been established in tradition.

The atheist begs the question, and by begging it he advances a foolish and arrogant proposition: since to be sure that the first men could not be witnesses of the beginning of the world, he must assume that he knows, very exactly, how the world we inhabit was framed, if it was framed at all. Such inconveniencies happen frequently to those who combat truth. They call temerity to their aid; and they affirm, boldly, on precarious conjectures: and when they have heated their own imagination, they hope, and not always in vain, to seduce those of other men. In the defence of the truth, we shall never be reduced to any such extremity. Though the atheist must pretend to know how the material world was made, and in what manner the human race began, in order to deny that the first men were competent judges and witnesses of both. We pretend to no such knowledge: but nothing less than such knowledge can justify his denial; whereas the universality of the tradition justifies

justifies abundantly our affirmation. We may affirm, on the faith of all mankind, that the world began, much better than it can be affirmed, on the faith of a few precarious, partial, and inconsistent traditions, that there was an empire of the Aſſyrians.

To build a world is not so easy a thing as many a speculative architect has imagined. The author of the book of Genesis begins his history by it; and though we do not set to his account the use which has been made of passages in his narration, yet it is impossible to excuse all the puerile, romantick, and absurd circumstances, which nothing could produce but the habit of dealing in trifling traditions, and a most profound ignorance. It is impossible to read what he writ on this subject, without feeling contempt for him as a philosopher, and horrour as a divine; for he is to be considered under both these characters.

Natural philosophy made little progress among the Greeks and the Romans, and a system of the universe was very little known by them. The eastern nations knew it better; but among these we must not reckon that of the Jews. It has been said, that Pythagoras was a disciple of the prophet Ezekiel, or had some other Jewish masters. If this idle conjecture were true in fact, it would not be true, however, that he took from them his mundane system. Philolaus, who published his doctrines, had very different notions of it from those of the Jews, and from those of the other Greeks. One would think too, that some modern astronomer

agronomer had dictated the hypothesis, which Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius attribute to Cleanthes the Samian. This true system, which accords so little with that of Moses, after having been long lost, was renewed in the sixteenth century by Copernicus, confirmed and improved by Galilei and Kepler, and since demonstrated by Newton. How magnificent a scene of the universe have these new discoveries opened! how much more worthy of the wisdom, the power, and the immensity of God, than all the paultry confined systems of ancient philosophers, and of Moses among the rest!

Though we know much more than they did of the works of God, yet we know as little as they did concerning the production of them. Antiquity had other makers of worlds beside Moses. Plato was one of those; and if his hypothesis be no more probable than that of the Jewish legislator, it is, at least, a little more reverential to the supreme Being. The same presumptuous confidence has been seen in these ages, wherein philosophers, having greater knowledge, should have had more modesty, and have been more sensible how ignorant we remain, after all the improvements we are capable of making. Des Cartes, for instance, who had much of this presumption, and employed a great deal of artifice to make his hypotheses pass for real discoveries, acknowledged a little more need of a God than Strato avowed. He wanted a God to create matter, and to impress motion on it. But when he had assumed thus much, he thought

thought himself able to proceed without this help, and to show how the world was formed, or how a universe might be formed, by the laws of matter and motion. I told Damon, that I thought this philosopher's ill success would hinder him from any enterprise of the same kind; that I should therefore, have still a right to conclude, that he begged the question, when he asserted that it implied contradiction to suppose the first men capable of knowing that the world began; and I desired him further to consider with me, whether, laying this presumption aside, we may not assume without any, that there might have been certain marks, by which the first men must necessarily know, that they were the first men, and that the system of the world began. If we find such marks, and find them probable, by their analogy to what we know, it will follow, I think, that the beginning of the world has some proof "à posteriori;" whereas the eternity of it can have none of this kind, any more than "à priori."

However this planet of ours was formed, the first men could not possibly be spectators of the formation of it. Both men and all other animals required an earth to walk on, food to nourish them, and an atmosphere to breathe in, and the light of the sun to conduct them. The prior existence of the sun might be necessary too, on another account, antecedently to their creation. This great luminary might be necessary to the formation, as we know that it is to the preservation, of our planet, whether that of the moon were so or not, and whether the Arcadians were in

in the right or not, when they said, that they were older than this secondary planet.

But now, though there could be no human witnesses of the world arising out of a chaos, and growing into that form and order wherein we see it, yet the first men might know, very certainly, that this system of things began to exist. As it would be ridiculous to assert, like the Thuscan author, whom Suidas mentions but does not name, that God employed twelve thousand years in creating the universe; so is there no necessity of believing that the solar system, or even this one planet, was the work of six days. Such precipitation seems not less repugnant to that general order of nature, which God established and which he observes in her productions, than the day of rest, which Moses supposes God to have taken, or which the Jews invented to make one of their institutions more respectable, is repugnant to all the ideas we are able to frame of the Divinity. Though it be conformable to our notions of wisdom, that every thing necessary to man was created, when he began to exist; yet is there nothing which obliges us to believe, that mankind began to exist in all the parts of the world at once.

We need put our imagination to no great efforts, to believe that all this might be: and if it might be, we may suppose that it was. We do not, like reasoners "à priori," imagine what may have been according to our abstract reasonings, and so conclude from possibility to actuality. We proceed much more

more reasonably from actuality to possibility, in a method so often, and so absurdly reversed by philosophers. A more able naturalist would succeed better in finding those marks, by which the first men might know the commencement of this system. I will mention three or four, which are obvious enough, and may serve to explain a matter that seemed paradoxical, and is not perhaps absolutely essential to my argument.

The general opinion of all those who have reasoned about the creation or formation of the world, and that which Moses himself follows, assumes that there was originally a chaos or confused mass of matter, wherein all the elements or first principles of things which exist in the material system, were contained. Whether this mass was created or no, they thought it so necessary to be supposed, that they could not go on one step, in building a world, without it. As soon as it is supposed, "instant ardentes Tyrii," they all go to work. Every one separates and disposes these materials in his own way; the laws of mechanism are employed, according to the different plans of these architects, and a world is soon made. —In one of these philosophical romances, published at the end of the last century, the ingenious author assumes that our planet was, till the deluge, in a direct situation to the sun; that is to say, that it's axis was parallel to the axis of the ecliptick, or, in other words, that the ecliptick was confounded with the equator. Among several advantages which he pretends to draw from this hypothesis,

thesis, the great facility of peopling the world with inhabitants is one. He thinks that animals could not have been brought forth, nor have grown up, if there had been any variety in the seasons by the obliquity of the ecliptick, and if these children of the earth, hatched, as we may say, by the sun, had been exposed, at first, to the injuries of the air, and to the cold of a winter. Had this author been opposed by his own tribe alone, and in a theological way, he might have escaped pretty well; but the natural philosophers and the mathematicians rose up against him, and battered down his hypothesis. I enter not into particulars. The conclusion drawn from all their arguments was this, that the present situation being more advantageous to the Earth, in general, than any other, we ought to be persuaded that it is now the same wherein God placed it originally. But I doubt very much whether this conclusion be undeniable. The supreme Being proportions always his means to his ends, and may therefore employ different means when different ends are to be attained. Let it be that the present obliquity of the ecliptick, which is of twenty-three degrees and twenty-nine minutes, may be in the present state of the world the most advantageous. Nothing hinders us from assuming, that another obliquity, or no obliquity at all, might be more advantageous when the present system of things began. If that of the chevalier de Louville be true, this obliquity was of about forty-five degrees one hundred and thirty thousand years ago. On the comparison

of

of which two obliquities, I shall leave philosophers and mathematicians to dispute as long as they please.

What it is to my purpose to observe is, that no proof will arise, from all they can say, to convince us that the present was the original situation of the world to the sun. Infinite wisdom does not change the means, as divines would sometimes make us believe that he does, at least in the economy of the moral system, when the ends are the same. Nay, the same means serve often to accomplish different ends. But when the ends are so different, that the means of accomplishing one imply contradiction with the means of accomplishing another, we may say, very assuredly, that Infinite Wisdom changes the means; and, therefore, if the means of preserving the material and animal world are different from those which were necessary to the beginning of both, the present position of the Earth may very well be thought not to have been the first. If alternate corruptions and generations are become necessary, and if the former produce the latter, it could not be so from the first. The first was certainly very different from those which we observe. Corruption could not then be necessary to generation. If a greater degree of heat was so for some productions, that greater degree is to be found in Burnet's hypothesis. If less, and very different degrees were necessary, these different degrees are to be found in the same hypothesis gradually lessening from the equator, and this gradation, by which different climates are formed, might be

necessary

necessary for different productions to a certain distance from that climate where the sun was always in the zenith. As there were no variations in these different climates, but each enjoyed a particular and uniform season, the animals and plants of each were nourished and carried to the perfection of their growth, by the same principle by which they had been produced, and in a manner suitable to their nature, and to that of their climate.

While it fared thus with one part of the world, the other parts were in a very different state according to this hypothesis. But far from finding any thing here, that may seem repugnant to the wisdom of the architect, this wisdom seems more fully displayed than in the hypothesis of Moses or of Plato, and this order to have much more analogy with the order of nature which we see established. These different climates appear like so many different matrices or wombs, impregnated with the original seeds of things, and wherein the first productions were formed by the inconceivable energy of divine power. In other climates, more distant from the equator, where the influence of the sun, the first of second causes employed in these generations, was gradually less felt, the great work of the creation might advance more slowly. In climates still more distant, this influence might become too weak to produce any considerable effects, and the great work might proceed still more slowly, or not at all. Then, perhaps, the obliquity of the ecliptick might begin, by slow degrees, without causing

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any disorder in the climates already inhabited. The first situation of the world to the sun having had it's effect, another situation might become necessary for two purposes, to render those climates, where the sun was always in the zenith, more temperate; to carry the generations of animals and of the fruits of the earth forward on both sides to the north and to the south: to give a greater degree of heat, where a greater was still wanted, and to give some where there was none at all.

We may believe, that this obliquity of the ecliptick arose much faster than the chevalier de Louville assumed it to decrease. A minute in one hundred years is too little. Let us suppose, on the prerogative of hypothesis, a degree, and even more, if you think fit. In this manner, those parts of the world, which were excessively heated, cooled, and those which were frozen by cold, heated gradually. Thus a system of final causes became, it may be, complete, and the Earth having passed through the positions which were, of all possible positions, the most proper to create, might stop at that which is said to be, of all others, the most proper to preserve.

If the learned master of the Charter-house, and the able Scotch mathematician, who writ against him, were still alive, I should expect that they would think themselves under some obligation to me for having endeavoured to compromise matters between them, and to unite, in one scheme, their contrary opinions. But since I cannot have

this advantage, I must content myself with the inward satisfaction I feel, in contemplating this plausible notion, which I have advanced on grounds as good as many of those, that are not deemed paradoxical either by divines or philosophers, have been established. They are possible no doubt; and I presume, they will never be demonstrated false, nor any other ways of accounting for the same things, true. It is not however quite necessary to my purpose: for whatever circle our planet described when her course round the sun began, we must be persuaded, that the surface of it was warmed and cherished enough by the rays of the central sun to promote generation and vegetation, for which it was already prepared.—If the present obliquity of the ecliptick prevailed then, the torrid, the temperate, and the frozen zones, as we call them, might be capable of the various productions proper to them; or we may assume, very consistently, that countries more distant received, from those that were nearer the sun, such animals and such plants as their climates were fit to preserve, though not fit to generate.—In short, we need not apprehend the want of heat even on the received hypothesis. The sun, much older probably than our world, and who has, certainly, grown older ever since, may have lost much of the force and efficacy which he had in those primæval days. Nay more; astronomers and natural philosophers agree, I think, about that perpetual expense, which all the suns of the universe are at, to enlighten, to warm, and nourish

rish their several systems; of which expense we must believe, that our sun has his share. They assume indeed, that the atmospheres of these suns compress so strongly the exhalations that rise from them, and drive them back with so much force and so much economy, not suffering any more than are absolutely necessary to pass, that these springs of light and heat cannot be exhausted, nor suffer any great diminution, in thousands of years. But thousands of years, and God alone knows how many, are elapsed since our sun was first lighted up, and he may have therefore suffered some diminution.

These hypothetical reasonings, and others to the same purpose, may be, I think, maintained, whether we suppose this obliquity of the ecliptick to have been decreasing or increasing: for the decrease of some minutes in a century, during a space of time, even as long as that which the Egyptians imagined, will not be found inconsistent with our hypothesis. Our hypothesis wants to assume little more than this, that nature, who acts with much simplicity and uniformity, acted much in the same manner after her first productions, in those of animals for instance; and if this be granted, it will follow, evidently, that the first men were competent witnesses of the first propagations of the animal kind; which would be of itself a sufficient proof, that they were such of the beginning of the world.

Nature has every where fixed certain seasons, at which all, or the greatest part of them, pro-

pagate their several species, while man enjoys the noble prerogative of doing the same all the year round, " Homini maximè coitus temporibus " omnibus opportunus est." It is Aristotle who says this. But then this prerogative extends no further: and a term is fixed to man, as it is to the species of all other animals for the bearing their fruit. The philosopher, I have cited, descends into a particular account of these different terms, in the fifth book of his history of animals, and as we know that men are nine months in their mothers' bellies, he assures us that the camel is twelve. These animals, then, and all those who require a longer term than that of nine months, appeared later even than the second generation of human creatures, in the ordinary manner that it has been carried on from the first generation downwards. Men were by consequence witnesses of the first propagations of animals. The same proposition will hold, if we suppose them generated faster and sooner in the course of these generations, or even primævally; for, if man, for example, was but three days or three hours, in forming out of the earth, and in receiving the breath of life, it will follow, by a very fair analogy, that the same operations took up four days or four hours for the formation of a camel, and eight for that of an elephant.

I might expect to hear, upon this occasion, many commonplace notions advanced, to show more time required, in the process of nature, to form this animal after the image of God, than all

all the others, so vastly inferiour to him in figure and composition. But these persons ought to reflect, that how distant soever animal may be from animal, relatively to our notion of perfection and imperfection, there can be no difference in the distance between any of them and God, who ordered this process of nature for reasons that we do not know, but certainly without regard to that dignity of nature which we imagine. The creation of a man or of an angel, in the works of God, is not more considerable than the creation of the meanest insect, nor requires that the divine energy should be exerted in a longer and more operose process of nature.

But if it is probable that the first men might see the commencement of those species of animals, whose formation required longer time than their own, it is not impossible, neither, that they might see the commencement of those species, whose formation required a less time. We may very easily imagine, that the creation had two sorts of progression, as the world has two sorts of motion. Nature might follow such an order as we have mentioned, in every climate; but she might follow a certain general order likewise, in all climates alike. As more time was necessary for the production of one animal than another, in the same climate, so more time might be necessary to bring the same animal up to the perfection of his nature in one climate than in another. As the hare might begin to run and

the sheep to feed before either man, or camel, or elephant was sufficiently formed to answer the ends of it's creation; so the creation, in general, might be far advanced, or even completed, in some climates, before it was so in others. The seeds, or first principles of animal life, might have more or less force and vigour, according to the different influences of the sun, though they were scattered every where alike. The first men, therefore, who might see no more than the last acts, if I may say so, of this great drama in the countries where they themselves arose, might see the very first acts, wherein animals were brought on the stage, in other countries. They might be spectators at twice, and in a reversed order, of the whole piece.

Creation finished, propagation began, and the same instinct urged the two sexes to the same act. Instinct urged them to it first; a sense of pleasure recalled them to it afterward; and the multiplication of their species was not a motive, probably, to these conjunctions. The revolution of some months showed them the consequences of it; and the revolution of some years showed them, that they and their offspring were born to die. Let us put ourselves, for a moment, in the place of the first men. Could they doubt that they were such? Could they doubt that all the other animals they saw were the first of their kinds likewise? Could they fail to transmit to their posterity this tradition, "the world had a "beginning?"

"beginning?" He who has a great mind to cavil, may say, that they did not know, by these marks, that the material world began, they only knew, that the animal inhabitants of it began then to exist. But if the first men could not be witnesses of their own creation, they might be such of the creation of other animals, as much as of the propagation of their own, and of every other species: so that, if they knew certainly, that the animal world began, I do not see what the atheist will gain by assuming that they were ignorant of the beginning of the material world. A God was necessary for one as much as for the other, and if tradition affirmed nothing more than the first, it would serve equally well to refute the atheist, who denies the existence of any such Being. Was it necessary, to discover this great truth, that they should reason logically, and transmit to posterity an opinion only? But in all cases they might know, by other marks sufficient to awaken the attention of a Samojede, or to inform a Hottentot, that the whole system then began. The lives of these men were, probably, much longer than ours; and if you compare what they must have seen in their youth, with what they must have observed in their old age, you will find that the experience of their whole lives was one continued proof to them, that they lived in the first age of the material world. Observe it in one instance. The earth, out of which they had been created, furnished what was necessary for their subsistence:

" per se dabat omnia tellus ;
" Contentique cibis nullo cogente creatis,
" Arbuteos fœtus, montanaque fraga, legebant, &c.

These were the spontaneous gifts of nature, and men had no share, at first, in the production or improvement of them. They learned, in time, to do both, to sow corn, and to make bread. Trees grew up, and as they grew, they furnished a better retreat to birds, and a better shade to men. An old oak became at length, to them, a new phænomenon.

If it was not time to finish this article, I might easily show, in a multitude of other instances, that the first men must necessarily know, that they were contemporaries with the material world, and saw the beginning of a new order of things. But after wandering, in complaisance to the atheist, in the spaces of imagination, and to show him that, although neither the first nor the last of men were able to discover how the world was made, yet the first might know by sufficient experience, and the last by sufficient testimony, that it had a beginning, let us return into the closer precincts of reason, and finish this article, as Mr. Huygens finishes his conjectures about the planetary world. After speaking of the absurdities contained in the physicks of Des Cartes, he adds, " mihi magnum quid consecuti vide-
" bimur, si, quemadmodum sese habeant res quæ
" in naturâ existunt, intellexerimus, à quo lon-
" gissimè etiam nunc absumus. Quomodo au-
" tem

" tem quæque effectæ fuerint, quodque sint esse " cœperint, id nequaquam humano ingenio exco- " gitari, aut conjecturis attingi, posse," this philosopher asserts with great reason. Experimental philosophy has made great progress already, in discovering to us the things and the order of nature. Where it continues to be cultivated it will continue, doubtless, to discover more, and after all, human knowledge will stop far short of human curiosity; for this goes beyond our means of knowledge, nay, even beyond the boldest conjectures we can make.

But now, having shown the atheist, " ex " abundantiâ," how the first men might have certainty of knowledge concerning the beginning of the world, and were, therefore, authentick witnesses of the truth of this fact and authentick authors of the tradition, it is time to show, that, without entering into such considerations, we must allow this tradition to be a tradition of fact, and not of opinion. This is the second of those articles that we proposed to examine in answer to the atheist's objections.—There must be some certain principles and some certain rule to distinguish between these two sorts of tradition, as the atheist seems to allow, when he distinguishes one from the other. Now these principles are not, I think, hard to find, and the rule that results from them, is simple and plain.

Common sense requires, that every thing proposed to the understanding should be accompanied with such proofs as the nature of it can furnish.

furnish. He who requires more, is guilty of absurdity. He who requires less, of rashness. As the nature of the proposition decides what proofs are exigible, and what not, so the kind of proof determines the class into which the proposition is to be ranged. He, for instance, who affirms, that there is a God, advances a proposition which is an object of demonstrative knowledge alone, and a demonstration is required from him. If he makes the demonstration, we are obliged to own that we know there is a God, and the proposition becomes a judgment of nature, not merely an opinion, according to the distinction made somewhere in Tully; though demonstrations are sometimes called opinions, as opinions are often called demonstrations. If, by his fault or by ours, we have not a clear perception of the ideas, or of the connection of them, which form this demonstration, or if, without troubling ourselves to follow it, we receive the proposition for true on the authority of others, it is, indeed, opinion, not knowledge in us. But whether we receive it, or whether we reject it, we can neither require nor employ, with propriety, any other proofs than those which are conformable to the nature of the proposition. Tradition is not one of them. It may prove that men have generally believed a God, but it cannot prove that such a Being exists. Nothing can be more trifling, therefore, than to insist, as theists are apt to do, on this proof, as if the opinion proved the fact; as if all men had been alike capable of the demonstration;

monstration; or, as if the demonstration was not necessary to establish the truth of the opinion. Demonstration, indeed, is not necessary on the hypothesis, that all men have an innate idea of God. But this hypothesis has been, I think, long exploded. I do not remember, at least, to have heard it maintained by more than one archbishop, two or three ignorant monks, and as many devout ladies.

As much as I am convinced of the existence of a supreme, all-perfect Being, as seriously as I adore his majesty, bless his goodness, and resign myself cheerfully to his providence, I should be sorry to rest my conviction on the authority of any man, or of all mankind: since authority cannot be, and demonstration is, the sole proper proof in this case. Should I quote to the atheist, a Suphis, an Amenophis, an Orus, or any of those pretended contemplators of divinity, he would laugh at me with reason; though he might allow, at the same time, that these seers, who acknowledged inferiour beings, beings little raised above humanity, were infinitely less absurd than those who had the front to assert, that they saw the invisible God, and conversed familiarly with him. The demonstration of his existence arises from sensitive knowledge; since it is "à poste-"riori" only, that we can prove the first cause to be an intelligent cause: but he is not for that an object of sensitive knowledge. This proposition, therefore, "there is a God," which becomes a judgment of nature, an object of demonstrative knowledge to every one who can make the demonstration

tion, or understand it when it is made, comes down as an opinion only, in tradition, and can pass for nothing better on that authority.

Is this now the case of that proposition which affirms the beginning of the world? Reason alone can authorise the first, and when I subscribe to the truth of it, I do this without any regard to tradition. All that tradition tells me is, that men made the same judgment four or five thousand years ago. If it told me, that they made a contrary judgment, and believed the world eternal, I should make still the same on a subject, concerning which we of this age are as competent judges as the men who lived at any time before us.—This proposition, "the world had a begin-"ning," affirms a fact long ago past, and which can, therefore, be received for true on no other authority than that of men who lived long ago, and at, or near the time when this event happened. I consult my reason, indeed, to examine whether the fact implies contradiction, no more, and when I find that it does not, I receive it for true, on the faith of human testimony, which is the proper proof, to me, of every fact whereof I have not been, myself, a witness, and without any regard to the supposed conformity of it to the general ideas of mankind. This supposed conformity, if it be real, will add nothing to the probability of the fact, as a nonconformity will take none away. Nothing, therefore, can be more trifling than the cavil made by the atheist, when he objects, that the more probable this tradition

dition is, the more reason we have to take it for a universal tradition of opinion, not of fact. The cavil is not only trifling, but to the last degree absurd; for on this principle it will follow, that the more probable a fact is, the less reason we have to receive it, as a true fact, on historical or traditional authority. I consult my reason and my experience to discover whether the fact I am told may have happened possibly, and then I consult history and tradition to discover whether it has happened actually. But, according to Damon's logick, the more my reason and my experience show me the first, the more reason I have to believe, that history and tradition record, in every such case, an ancient opinion, not an ancient fact.

But it is time that I should hasten to a conclusion, by showing, in the last place, that if the world had not really had a beginning, the opinion of it's eternity would have been the general opinion of antiquity, and the commencement of it would not have been transmitted by tradition, either as a fact, or, perhaps, as an opinion. Though men might, in all ages, demonstrate the existence of God, they could not demonstrate alike in any age the commencement of the world: and, accordingly, we see that some philosophers, who believed there was a first principle, a first intelligent cause, a supreme Being, held, at the same time, that the world was eternal, far from being induced by their theism, to believe it had a commencement. Others were, I doubt not, confirmed in the opinion that there was a God, or

even

knowledge; that every thing is what it appears to us to be; and that the things, which do not appear to us, are not. He who sees no inequality between two objects, affirms that they are equal, and we judge naturally of the reality of all objects by the perceptions we have of them. Ancient astronomers believed the stars to be immovably fixed in a solid firmament, and never suspected them to incline to the pole, or to decline from it. The sea was thought to have no bounds, because the bounds of it were unknown, and the celestial bodies to be incorruptible, because no changes were discerned in them. Philosophers reason often, and the vulgar always, like the roses in Fontenelle. A comparison taken from those insects who live one day only would have been more to his purpose; but roses were more worthy than insects to be offered to the marquis, and such a philosopher as Fontenelle might dispense with some want of precision in favour of his gallantry. Such as I have described it is the natural character of the human mind. It infects all our judgments, moral as well as physical, till we learn to correct it by experience and a long course of reflection. This the uncivilised ignorant people, we speak of, could not do; and it was therefore agreeable to the general disposition of their minds, to believe that things had been always, such as they saw them to be.

This must have been universally the case, I think, in countries where the natural unimproved character of the human mind prevailed alone. In those,

those, which philosophy began to enlighten, some might doubt of this eternity; but some other philosophers, and the people in general, would continue to believe it. From whence can we imagine, that they should derive a contrary opinion? Their experience showed them, indeed, generation and corruption; that particular things began, and then ceased to be; but they saw, on the whole, a uniform series of the same revolutions of things; their ideas were conformable to the experience which framed them, and the eternity of the world was conformable to these ideas. Such considerations may serve to show what I have advanced, that the eternity of the world might have been the universal tradition, but that the commencement of it could not have been so, if it had not commenced, and men had not known that it had. On this hypothesis, all the consequences of it follow naturally. One consequence is, that, since the world and mankind began in time, the tradition of this beginning should be a little more or a little less obscurely, but universally known, and this consequence has followed. Another consequence is, that men, who believed the world to have been created, in the strict sense of the word, or that the confused matter of a chaos was reduced into a mundane system, must have believed, that this stupendous system was produced by some principle unknown to them, and superiour to itself; for they could not fail to perceive, on the first notices of sense, and the first essays of reason, that the idea of an

effect included necessarily in it the idea of a cause. This consequence followed likewise. Once more, although the first men could doubt no more that some cause of the world, than that the world itself, existed; yet another consequence of this great event, and of the surprise, inexperience, and ignorance of mankind, must have been much doubt and uncertainty concerning the first cause; and this likewise followed. Cudworth has endeavoured to prove, many have thought, and I incline to think, that the unity of a first intelligent cause was the original belief of mankind. But if it was so, a belief soon succeeded, that gods, coadjutors to the first, in making and governing the world, as well as inferiour gods, and men, and the whole material world, proceeded from this eternal source of all existence. I need not enumerate any of those various hypotheses, that arose from such absurd notions. Many of them have continued to this day, and are held even by christians, whom revelation as well as reason enlightens. The tradition of the fact, that the world began, and that of the opinion, that God is, have come down to us, though not entirely without opposition, from the most early ages. But the manner of God's being, and of his working in the creation and government of the world, have been matters of dispute in all ages, ever since presumptuous mortals affected to descend into particulars, to know any thing at all of one, or any thing more of the other, than that he is self-existent and all-perfect, and that his will, relatively

tively to his human creatures, is revealed to them in the constitution of their system.

To conclude. I am far from resting the proof of God's existence on the authority of this tradition, that the world began. I know that we are able to demonstrate this fundamental truth of all religion, whether it began or no. But since we cannot reject this tradition without renouncing almost all we know, and since it leads men to acknowledge a supreme Being, by a proof levelled to the meanest understanding, I think we ought to insist upon it. I am the more confirmed in thinking so, by the effect it had in the dispute of which I have given you some account. Damon was embarrassed by it so much, that he had recourse at last to the wild hypothesis of Democritus and Epicurus, if we really know what that of the former was. This hypothesis is an abyss of absurdity. In that I left him, pitying from the bottom of my heart, for I love the man, his blindness and his obstinacy; the blindness of one who sees so clearly, and the obstinacy of one who shows so much candour on other occasions.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME

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